



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



37.

420.

THE
HUNTERS OF THE PRAIRIE,
OR
THE HAWK CHIEF.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

THE
HUNTERS OF THE PRAIRIE,
OR
THE HAWK CHIEF.

A TALE OF THE INDIAN COUNTRY.

BY JOHN TREAT IRVING, JUN.

AUTHOR OF "INDIAN SKETCHES."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1837.

420.

TO

PETER IRVING, Esq.

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED,

IN TOKEN OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION.

BY HIS NEPHEW,

JOHN T. IRVING, JUN.

INTRODUCTION.

THE tract of country in which the scene of the following story is laid, is but little known, even to the borderer of the "far West." It is a wild and luxuriant region of prairies, glowing with gorgeous flowers and rich herbage, and here and there intersected by small rivers of crystal water, bordered by groves of lofty trees. It is, in truth, a fairy-land, and fitted for wild adventure.

This wilderness is inhabited by various tribes of Indians, the names of but few of whom are necessary to be mentioned, as bearing connexion with the following pages.

The KONZAS are a numerous and warlike

tribe, situate upon the river bearing that name, which empties into the Missouri, about a hundred and fifty miles above its junction with the Mississippi. These Indians are now partly civilized, and have become skilful in the use of fire-arms, and for that reason are feared by the ruder savages of the district.

The OTOES are a tribe, nearly resembling the Konzas in feature and garb. Their town is situate upon the Platte river, a few miles above its junction with the Missouri.

The OSAGES are another tribe who inhabit the Arkansaw. They strongly resemble the Konzas and Otoes, and though generally at war with them, have probably sprung from the same stock. The language, form, and Roman features of these three tribes are strikingly similar; while there is a marked distinction

between them and the other tribes of that neighbourhood.

The PAWNEES are among the most numerous and rudest of our Indian tribes. They are clothed in skins, and as yet are almost unpractised in the use of fire-arms. They inhabit four villages on the Platte river, and are known by the names of The Grand Pawnees—The Republican Pawnees—The Tappage Pawnees, and the Pawnee Loups, or Wolves. The three last villages are situate upon what is called the Loup fork of the Platte, while the first stands upon the Republican fork of the same river, and is twenty miles distant from the rest. They are about ninety miles to the north-west of the Otoes.

The SIOUX are a very numerous tribe from the upper Missouri.

The OMAHAWs—or the 'Mahaws, as they are generally called—are not very numerous, and inhabit a town on the banks of the Missouri, about fifty miles to the north-east of the Otoes.

The region inhabited by these tribes abounds in turkeys, deer, and elk. In particular, the borders of the NEMAHAW, a small but picturesque river emptying into the Missouri, is frequented by large herds of the last animal, and is, in consequence, the resort of various tribes of Indians, many of whom, being at war with each other, encounter upon this hunting-ground, and bloodshed ensues.

This brief outline may tend to throw some light upon the story.

The author has related in a former work* his tour into those regions in 1833, in which he was present at the treaties concluded with the hostile tribes. The present work relates to recitals he then heard, to scenes he visited, and, in part, to individuals, both white and Indian, who came under his observation. Such is the foundation of this story, in which he attempts also to illustrate an adventurous frontier life, without scrupulously rejecting picturesque and striking incidents, because he cannot vouch for their absolute veracity.

* Indian Sketches.

200

1000 1000 1000

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

THE
HUNTERS OF THE PRAIRIE,
OR
THE HAWK CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

——— He was pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay.

* * * *

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind,
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood.

* * * *

He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf.

Prisoner of Chillon.

THE heavy mists which during a cool October night had rested upon the waters of the

Nemahaw river were wreathing through the woods that bordered its banks ; the tops of the trees were gilt with the bright rays of a morning sun, which gave a gorgeous beauty to the rainbow tints of the autumn foliage,—the mantle of the departing year. Occasionally small flocks of perroquets flew with swift wing through the branches of the trees, making the woods re-echo to their noisy screams. A solitary raven had left his watch-tower upon the silvery top of a dead sycamore, and was soaring high up in the heavens ; and even that vagabond bird, the turkey-buzzard, the vulture of America, was floating far up in the blue sky, rivalling the eagle in the beauty and majesty of his flight. The dew-drops were sparkling like gems upon the leaves of the trees, and a freshness was playing in the morning air, which gave the indication of a bright and cheery day.

In the midst of a grove shading the banks of the river, and in front of a large fire, were

seated two persons. The age of the youngest might have been twenty, perhaps more. His dress was simple, and suited to the wildness of the country around him. A light hunting-coat of highly-dressed deer-skin was girded round his waist by a broad leathern belt, serving to set off a form whose slightness gave more promise of activity than strength. A few locks of light hair escaped from beneath a gay cap, also made of deer-skin, and curiously ornamented with stripes of porcupine quill. It was worn, however, more for appearance than use, as it served rather to adorn than shade the frank and fearless face beneath it. In his belt he carried a silver-hilted dirk, a substitute for the less elegant though more serviceable hunting-knife. A pair of buck-skin leggings, which bore the marks of much rough usage, and many a hard encounter with bushes and briers, were drawn over his pantaloons, and completed his dress. With the exception of these last articles, the

lightness and even richness of his attire, though modelled after that of the hunters of this district, at once pointed him out as not belonging to a class who look alone to durability in their habiliments. Near him, against the trunk of a tall cotton tree, rested a light rifle, whose highly-finished barrel, and stock inlaid with silver, showed that it had come from the forge of no workman west of the Mississippi.

His associate was in every respect a back-wood hunter. He had numbered about forty winters; and his scarred and weather-beaten features told many a tale of danger and exposure. His broad white forehead strongly contrasted with a face of the most swarthy hue, and gave an air of natural nobility to his whole countenance. There was stamped too upon his mouth an expression of unwavering resolution which that feature alone can convey, giving to him an air of quiet intrepidity, that bespoke one who felt a full reliance upon

his own powers, and would not shrink from bringing them into action. His eye was grey, stern in its expression, and exceedingly brilliant. His dress, though of coarser materials, resembled that of his companion, and in the formation far more attention appeared to have been bestowed upon the usefulness than the beauty of the garments. Like his companion, his waist was belted with a broad leathern girdle. To it was attached a short scabbard of undressed cow-hide, containing a strong-bladed knife, which might serve either as a weapon of defence, or for the more peaceable employment of cutting his food. Between his knees was a short yager,—a species of rifle much in vogue with the hunters of this part of the country, both on account of the convenience of its length, and the large size of its bore, which rendered it more fatal in its effects.

At the time of introducing these characters to the reader, they were both seated on a large

log in front of the fire. The eyes of both were fixed on a line of blue smoke which floated upwards, forming a pale canopy over their heads, and slowly wreathing among the branches of the overhanging trees. Some deep and engrossing subject seemed to be pressing on the minds of both, and to have wrapped them up in a world of its own, leaving its traces on their grave and silent faces. At length the younger of the two broke silence. "You are moody this morning, Norton," said he. "I would give the two best bullets in my pouch to know what occupies your thoughts."

His companion raised his head — "My thoughts, Herrick, are not so pleasant, that you need wish to buy them."

"Ah! I suppose you are still harping on the foot-print in the ashes of the burnt prairie. This same track appears to have troubled you much. — But, cheer up! The trappers are returning from the mountains about this sea-

son, and it may have been left by one who had straggled from the main body. Besides, it might have been made some days since ;— or even were it the fresh moccasin-print of an Indian, you could scarcely find a hostile one hereabouts. So you may scatter your fears to the winds.”

The other mused for some moments, and then fixed his clear eye on the face of his companion.

“ But this scalp-lock,” said he ; extending a long thin braid of human hair. “ It must have fallen from the leggin of an Indian. The Konzas and Otoes rarely wear them.—It has come from the dress of an Omahaw or Pawnee. The first are not too friendly, and a tomahawk and scalping-knife would be our certain welcome from the last. The track, too, was fresh ; for the gale which swept over the prairie in the morning would have covered it with ashes ; but it was clean, and made by the heavy tread of a strong-limbed man.—

There are those in our neighbourhood whose best wishes could not stop the flight of an arrow, should they catch a glimpse of us. It was thoughtless in you, boy, to kindle so large a fire, and above all, to heap it with green brushwood. It will send up a heavy smoke that will scarcely escape the eye of a Redskin should any chance to be lurking in these clumps of forest. The eagle has not a quicker eye for his prey than these cut-throat Indians."

"Well! well! let them come; we have arms."

"Arms!" replied the other, half contemptuously. "What will two rifles and two knives do against a hundred bows and tomahawks? Think you a Pawnee or Omahaw would venture alone, or even in a small band, in this neighbourhood, where every tribe is at open war with him? Take my word for it, if we fight one, we shall have to fight a hundred."

“ Well, well, Norton, we will do that when they come ; but don’t let us fight them before we see them,—it is a waste of ammunition.”

The hunter laughed as he replied, “ I am sometimes surprised at myself for still clinging to you ; for your thoughtlessness is constantly getting us into scrapes. However, I was once young and thoughtless myself.”

“ That of course,” replied Herrick in a merry tone. “ It’s the way with all old people to give that advice to their children which they never followed themselves. If the rising generation followed to the letter the precepts of their fathers and grandfathers, what a grey-headed world we should live in !”

“ Herrick,” said the other, eyeing him good-naturedly, “ will you never cease this bantering ?”

“ Certainly. In thirty years I shall be as demure and staid a gentleman as any of my age, and will give the same advice to my children, if I have any, that I now receive ; and

shall be as much astonished if they do not follow it, as *my* present advisers are.—Ha ! look yonder.”

At this exclamation the hunter sprang to his feet, and instinctively cocked his rifle. He cast a hurried glance in the direction intimated by the extended arm of his companion.

On the brow of a low hill, at a short distance from the thicket, stood a large cluster of animals closely crowded together.

“Pshaw! it is only a gang of elk,” said Norton, dropping his gun in the hollow of his arm.—“A fine herd, though. They will probably make for this timber.”

“If they do, we’ll have one of them,” said Herrick eagerly.

“Yes,” answered Norton, “and perhaps an Indian arrow by way of sauce.”

“Hush ! Norton, don’t speak so loud ; you may startle them. Look ! are they not beautiful ?”

The herd now stood with uplifted heads, surveying the whole expanse of prairie, seemingly in doubt whether to continue their course, or to make for the inviting thicket at their feet. At length a huge veteran, whose heavy branching antlers gave an air of importance to his movements, walked a few steps from the top of the hill ;—one followed—then another—and another. From a walk, their pace quickened to a trot, and in a few moments the whole herd poured down towards the spot where the hunters were standing. There was, however, a suspicion of lurking danger in the actions of the leader ; for as he bounded swiftly forward, his ears were pricked up ; his head, high in the air, moved from side to side as if in momentary fear of some hidden foe. The rest, relying wholly upon his guidance, followed frolicking and gambolling. They passed along the border of the woods, and came close upon the two men.

From the moment that they had left the

hill a new flame had kindled in the eye of Herrick. His fingers wandered round the trigger of his gun, and then were jerked away, as if restrained by the consciousness that danger might ensue. Still, as they approached, his restlessness increased. "I dare not fire. Yet, how easily I might *drop* that leader!" said he, raising his rifle to his cheek, and taking sight along its barrel. "He is very near: I might make sure of him. There! I have him now—exactly behind the left shoulder. Norton! shall I pull?"

"No, no! I tell you, no!—Should there be Indians about, your rifle crack would be sure to call them. Have you forgotten the foot-mark? 'Tis a warning that should not be disregarded. Our lives are worth more than a dead elk."

This answer seemed to carry conviction with it. With a sigh, which showed how great was the sacrifice, Herrick dropped the butt of his rifle heavily upon the ground.

The animals still advanced, though not as before. A feeling of insecurity had spread throughout the troop: their pace was slow; they crowded together; every nostril was expanded to the breeze, every eye on the watch, and every ear open to drink in the least sound of danger.

Herrick again lifted his rifle. He grasped its barrel with his left hand, and his finger again strayed around the trigger. Slowly, and almost unconsciously, he raised it to his cheek, and brought the muzzle to bear upon the leader. "Norton, did you ever see such antlers? He is not ten yards off. I do not think there can be *much* danger."

His voice, though suppressed, reached the ear of the already startled beast. Instantly his nose was raised higher, and his eyes rested upon the spot from whence the sound proceeded. "There! there! Norton, he sees us! By Heaven! he is turning away: we have no provisions—we shall be starving to-morrow. He is starting."—Crack!

The sharp report of the rifle rang through the woods. The singing of the bullet was heard, and the noble beast fell forward on his knees. The effect upon the rest of the herd was electrical. At first they crowded round the wounded leader, snorting loudly; then, apparently comprehending his fate, they scoured off over the hills. The deserted beast sprang up, and rushed madly forward in the direction they had taken: the leaps grew less and less; one more bound, he landed on his feet — his legs tottered — they yielded under him, and he fell in the edge of the thicket, with the death quiver running through his limbs.

“ Hurrah ! there ’s elk meat for you ! ” shouted Herrick, drawing his dirk. He thrust the bushes apart with the breech of his rifle; bounded through them; sprang over the dead logs; and in a moment reached the spot where the beast lay.

“ ’Twas the act of a fool ! ” muttered Norton

as he slowly prepared to follow. " Yet, the temptation was strong, and there's hot blood in that young frame. Perhaps, had they stopped much longer, I too should have done the same." Thus, half musing, half speaking, he slowly advanced to the edge of the thicket. Here he paused and keenly surveyed the prairie before venturing from the woods. Nothing was to be seen, and he was in the act of stepping out, when his ear was arrested by a sharp sound, as of a dead twig breaking beneath the tread of an animal. Quick as thought, he crouched, and peeped through the bushes, scanning with a sharp eye every shrub and every tree trunk around him. His fear had been awakened, and the recklessness of his young companion, in discharging his rifle, had increased his watchfulness. Every thing, however, was quiet, and he was preparing to rise from his concealment, when his attention was caught by an unusual quivering of the leaves of a small bush at a short distance

overgrown with wild pea-vines. He drew closer to his hiding-place. Presently the bush shook violently ; the dark painted head of an Indian was protruded from beneath it ; a pair of naked shoulders followed ; and an Indian completely armed emerged to view. With snake-like silence he stole from tree to tree, slowly winning his way towards Herrick.

But though he moved with all the instinctive craft of his people, he was under the eye of one whom many years spent in these wilds had rendered fully his equal. Inch by inch he moved forward—the hunter did the same. Whenever he paused and looked around, Norton crouched to the earth—and again as he crept cautiously forward the white followed. Some time had been thus consumed, and Herrick was impatiently looking about for his companion.

The Indian watched him for an instant, then rising behind the trunk of a large linden tree, fitted an arrow to his bow. There was

no time to be lost. Norton sprang to his feet. The noise of the motion caught the ear of the Indian. He turned, but too late. He had but time to see the hunter's yager pointed at his body, ere a stream of fire poured from its mouth. Its sharp report rang through the woods, and the wild scream of the warrior, as he leaped in the air, announced that its bullet had been a death messenger.

CHAPTER II.

* * * * * His breast
And brow were stained with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed ;
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob.

Siege of Corinth.

THE moment that the Indian fell, both Herrick and Norton rushed to the spot. He was dead, though his flesh was tremulous with recent life. The ball had passed through his left breast, and lodged against some bone, as it had not come out at the back. A small pool of blood was gathering around him ; but there was no motion, no convulsive jerk of the limbs,—all was quiet—the quiet of death. The

eyes were partly opened, the mouth closed with iron force, and the deep-knit furrows of his brow showed the acute anguish which had wrung from him his loud and fearful death-cry.

The hunter bent long and earnestly over the body. "It's an Indian from one of the Pawnee villages, as you may see by the paint of his buffalo skin, and the make of his leggins. I judge from his well-stocked quiver, that he must belong to some war-party which I am now certain is not far off. A moment later, Herrick, and you would have had his arrow through your jacket."

"That's true, Norton," said Herrick, extending his hand to the other, who wrung it warmly; "you have saved me. 'Twas my own folly that brought that fellow on me."

"Say no more about it, but load your rifle. We must be off, for these rifle cracks may bring others of the gang. Now follow me," said he, seeing that Herrick had reloaded his piece. "Keep the bushes between you and

the open country. Should they track us, our trail will puzzle them more here than on the ashes of the burnt prairie."

They pursued a hasty course through the tangled bushes, carefully avoiding a too near approach to the edge of the wood, and making directly along the margin of the river. For half an hour they had kept on through the tall bottom timber, following closely the crooked windings of the stream, and moving lightly and cautiously among the bushes, lest a broken twig or a crushed leaf should betray their course to those who they judged, but too truly, would soon be in pursuit. Suddenly Norton stopped and held up his hand—"Do you hear nothing, Herrick?"

"Nothing but the brook, as it brawls over the stones," was the answer.

"No! no! it was not *that*.—There! there it is again—and louder.—Do you hear it *now*?"

"Yes, I think so; it sounds like the howl of a distant wolf."

“A wolf never sent up that cry. It is as true an Indian yell as ever came from the throat of a Redskin. The Pawnees have come upon the carcass of their dead comrade. They will make this thicket too hot for us: they will swarm through it like bees. A swift foot and a keen eye alone will save us *now*. Take to the river; it has a rocky bottom and leaves no track.”

“Hark! they are after us,” said he, as a whoop again rose in the air, faint and distant, but apparently nearer than the former.—
“Push! push for the water.”

Herrick cast a glance at the face of his companion, to read in it, if possible, their fate; but it told no tales. It was as rigid as rock. The mouth was clenched, as usual, and the eye roved from side to side as it was wont to do even when no danger pressed them. His words, however, and accelerated pace, had told enough—and with rapid strides they gained the river.

“Keep among the stones—don’t step your wet moccasin upon any of the uncovered rocks—it will leave its mark. Take a quicker and a longer stride in this shallow water. When we reach the deep parts, we will then be slow enough.”

The Nemahaw river, down which they were pursuing their course, is one of those large streams which intersect the great western prairies. Its banks are skirted by groves of trees and brushwood, affording the only timber to be found in those wild regions. These forests are more or less luxuriant, according to the size of the stream, becoming more and more sparse as they recede from the water, until at last they yield to the wide waste of prairie which spreads out to the eye like a long rolling sea.

Norton continued to urge his companion onward; sometimes wading slowly, and nearly up to their waists, and again increasing their

speed when they reached a spot where the water was more shallow.

Another yell suddenly rose in the air behind them. It sounded startlingly near.

“This water clogs the feet,” exclaimed Herick, as he heard the fierce shrill sound. “’Tis tempting death to stay here. Let’s leave the stream, and take to the woods.”

“Are you mad? That leads to the grave. They would trail the print of your wet moccasin as easily as the hoof of an iron-shod horse. Follow me; ’tis your only hope. There is a chance that we may yet throw them off the track—for the bushes which skirt these banks are thick, and dip to the water. I have had many a slighter screen between me and my bitterest foe. Besides this, they have no certain track to follow. Courage, boy! courage! I have seen you run a greater risk without flinching.”

“Don’t fear me, Norton, if it comes to the

worst.—Hark ! was that a deer leaping in the thicket ?”

Norton stopped short, and raised his hand behind his ear :—“ I heard it too,—ha ! There ! —I see it, by Heaven ! ’tis an Indian—a Pawnee. He sees us. He is coming to the bank. —I dare not fire *now*—it will betray us to the rest. Here ! take my gun ; cold iron must decide this. Thank God ! he is alone.” He handed his gun to Herrick, and tightening the belt round his waist, stood ready for his foe.

There was a crashing sound among the distant underwood ; the bushes upon the bank were violently shaken, and tearing his way through them, the Indian bounded to the middle of the stream and confronted Norton. For a moment, a brief moment, they gazed at each other. But there was no time to be lost ; for even should Norton prove victorious,—which the appearance of his antagonist, who stood before him with every sinew in his powerful

frame strung for the fight, rendered a matter of much uncertainty,—still he might be delayed until the rest of the band came up. He, however, was fully aware of his peril, and with a sudden bound sprang forward and closed with the Indian. They were both men of prodigious muscle, and the struggle was fearful. The contest, however, was destined to be of short duration, for almost at the moment of the grapple, Herrick sprang forward and sheathed his dirk in the breast of the savage. With a convulsive leap the Indian freed himself from Norton, and fell into the water. A shudder passed over him—and all was finished. It was strange that so slight a blow should have sped the spirit of so stern a warrior, but so it was. The hunter raised the arm of his late foe; then loosing it, it fell heavily into the water. “Dead,” said he, as he looked at him. “There’s no make-believe about it. It was *his* life or *ours*. His wound does not bleed much, and the roughness of the water, as it

rushes over the stones, will prevent it from being seen."

Herrick made no reply to these philosophic remarks. He remained with his eyes fastened on the body, apparently astounded at the work of his own hands, and scarcely able to realize that the silent corpse was the same stern being who but a few moments previous had stood before him, glowing with native pride, and animated by all those feelings and impulses which influenced himself.

"Is he dead?" said he, gazing at the calm face.—"No ! he breathes."

The hunter turned and looked at the body. "No ! he's dead enough," said he, after a moment's careful scrutiny. "He was as strong as a buffalo bull—but his fighting days are over. Come ! give me my yager.—Hist ! what noise was that ? Was it a footstep ? Quick ! quick ! take hold of this body and help drag it under the bushes. There ! that will do," said he, as they half dragged, half floated it

to the edge of the stream, and concealed it under the overhanging shrubbery. "Now! Crouch! crouch!—Creep under those bushes. Raise your powder-horn from the water. Here they come," whispered he, as through the thick underwood he saw the dusky forms of a large body of Indians moving swiftly along, peering beneath every bush, and examining every inch of ground.

At length a footstep sounded close to their place of concealment. The two fugitives shrank down, and held their breaths. The bush which screened them shook—its thick branches were pressed upon their bodies—and an Indian, grasping the limb of a tree in one hand, to support himself, leaned over them, and looked down the stream.

The eye of the hunter blazed, and his hand grasped the handle of his knife, watching the instant they should be discovered, to strike. The savage, however, after a moment, drew himself up, and turned off into the woods.

CHAPTER III.

2nd Senator. Let us return,
And strain what other means is left unto us
In our dear peril.

1st Senator. It requires swift foot.

Timon of Athens.

“THAT fellow ran a narrow chance,” whispered Norton. “His dull eye saved him.”

Still the sounds of search, the breaking of bushes and rustling of leaves, told them that all risk was not yet passed. Occasionally, too, a heavy tread jarred upon the bank over their heads. But one after another these sounds decreased, the noise of cracking twigs grew more and more distant, and the deep guttural voices died away, until nothing was heard to

break the deep, deathly silence of the bottom. Then, and not till then, did Norton leave his hiding-place. He crept up the bank, screening his body behind a large bush, and with a fierce, keen glance ran his eye through the thicket. It was silent and deserted. From the bank he strode out into an open glade, and seeing nothing, called to his companion, "Come up from the water, Herrick; they have left us. They are scattering down the banks of the river as hungry after our blood as wolves. Our course now lies up the borders of the stream," said he, as Herrick made his appearance at his side. "I would give much were we well out of this wood; for it is so narrow, that when they find we have given them the slip, they will return for a second search, and may not overlook us then. Move on, and keep your eyes and ears both busy. Follow the track made by them through the bushes: the ground is hard trodden, and will not show the print of your moccasin."

These directions were given as they proceeded. With swift, though cautious steps, they wound their way through the thick underwood which clustered beneath the tall canopy of forest, following, though in a reverse direction, the broad and strongly-marked trail of their pursuers.

At length they reached to where the forest skirted the burnt prairie. Here Norton stopped to survey the various curves of the thicket as it followed the capricious windings of the stream. The view expanded for miles. It was vacant. Not an enemy was visible. A solitary wolf was skulking over the hills at a distance; the only tenant of the bleak and cheerless waste.

“It’s strange,” said Norton: “not an Indian to be seen! I should suppose one or two would be in the prairie to watch for us as we stole from one patch of timber to another.—Hist! what’s that wolf looking at?” exclaimed he, as with almost instinctive quickness he

observed that the animal stopped, erected its head, and gazed at some object. The next instant it fled over the waste.

“A wolf runs for nothing but a man! yet I see no signs of any,” muttered he.

“There is something yonder,” said Herrick, pointing in an opposite direction. . “It moves. It is a man’s head!”

“Yes, and there comes the rest of him,” replied Norton, as an Indian slowly rose from behind an opposite ridge. He was followed by others, until a large band were on the top, standing in bold relief against the sky. For a moment they paused to survey the prairie, and then followed the steps of their comrade.

“That looks ominous!” said Herrick. “They muster strong, and are directly in our course. They must have made a quick tramp to have got round here so soon.”

Norton watched them for some time with great narrowness. “These are Pawnees,” said he; “but they are not the same that

passed down the bottom, that's clear. The band must have divided; one party striking up the stream, while the other, which brushed by us so closely, was busy in ransacking the lower part of the bottom. They are now striking across that ridge to join their comrades."

"Then they have given us up?"

"For the present, perhaps; but they will join those hell-hounds below, and long before sun-down these woods will be filled with them. We must still keep to the thicket, and have a keen eye about us, for others may be straggling in these bushes; and when they once undertake to skulk, it would puzzle a hawk to find them. Should we come unawares upon them, a two-foot splinter of ash-wood, with a buzzard's feather at the end of it, would be our first salutation; or should we meet fairly, we would be obliged to have a bout. For this reason I would keep clear of them if I could.

I want no more fights to-day. Enough blood has been spilled already."

Whilst he was speaking, the last muffled form of the band disappeared behind a ridge on their left, and the two then resumed their route.

They had not proceeded, however, more than a mile, when, on moving through a thick cluster of bushes, they were startled by a sharp cry at a short distance; at the same time there was a violent rustling of leaves, and an object moved behind the shrubbery, though it was but indistinctly seen on account of the branches. At the same time a low muttering proceeded from the spot.

"It was here that I shot the Indian this morning," said Norton, half crouching behind a bush; "and it may be that some of the band have remained to watch the body; but they generally raise a louder death-wail than that."

Still the objects continued to stir among the brushwood, while occasionally a few indistinct sounds reached the ears of the fugitives.

They had remained thus on the watch for nearly half an hour. Norton had exhausted his patience, and was on the eve of advancing, determined to brave all danger that might ensue ; when, at that moment, the sound broke out into a loud snarling yell.

“ Poh ! ” said he, half angrily ; “ I know it now : ’tis the yelp of wolves. They have hold of your dead elk, and are fighting over his carcass. I ought to have perceived it before. The ravens and turkey-buzzards are settling upon the trees from all quarters. They would not be so plenty, were a Red-skin on watch.” As he spoke, he pointed to the trees, which were crowded with carrion birds, while numbers high up in the heavens were hovering and circling over the spot.

At the sight of men, however, clouds of

them flew from their perches, and with a whirring sound swept off through the woods. A few steps brought the two in full view of the wolves.

“Hush ! there’s an Indian sitting against yon tree,” exclaimed Herrick, half raising his gun. “He does not see us—’tis strange.”

“’Tis the dead man, the one I killed this morning. The others have placed him in that position to keep off the wolves till they return. Both birds and beasts are loath to commence upon a body when it retains a living attitude. —There’s a good deal of venison wasted,” said he, looking towards the elk, on which the wolves were making a hearty meal.

“The dinner of these rascals has been paid for by two Pawnees, and perhaps will cost us dear before the day is over. Let’s go on.”

About a mile further on, they took to the water, for the purpose of baffling pursuit. They waded through the bubbling stream until they came to where a large rock pro-

truded from the bank, reaching nearly half-way across it. Stepping upon this, that no foot-print might be stamped in the soft soil, they left the water, and struck through the wood's edge to the prairie. Here Norton turned to his companion—"Do you see yon hill?" said he, pointing to one of those square, flat-topped eminences here and there met with in the great western prairies, to the great annoyance of antiquaries, who are in doubt whether to look upon them as works of Nature, or lasting monuments of the laborious industry of man.

The elevation to which he pointed was an isolated hill, which rose abruptly from the prairie, standing like a solitary sentinel over the bleak waste. It must have been full three hundred yards square, and one hundred in height.

"It was on that hill," said he, still holding out his arm, "that I first saw an Indian fight. I had been on a hunting expedition with about

a hundred Konzas, and an old hunter named Adherbal. On our return we encamped for the night upon the banks of this river, and in this very grove of timber. We had scarcely commenced cooking our buffalo meat, (for the buffaloes then came to the very edge of the stream,) when one of the young men brought news that a party of Omahaw Indians were coming across the prairie towards this branch. In an instant the fires were put out—the Konzas hid themselves in the bushes, and waited for the approach of the band. As their bad luck would have it, they wound round the foot of that very hill and made directly for the ambush, and the first warning they received of their danger was the scream of three of their warriors who fell dead, with about a dozen arrows sticking through their bodies. At that time the Konzas were as wild as these Pawnees, and knew as little of the use of a rifle. Now, however, there are few better shots in the whole country. Upon

the death of their men, the Omahaws retreated. They were pursued by the Konzas until they fled to the top of that very hill, determined to fight to the last gasp—for mercy is a thing unknown among the Indians. It made my heart cold to see the Konzas surround the height, and, one by one, cut off the handful who were fighting for their lives on its top. The moon shone brightly, and I could see them at their work. There was no cry for quarter: the fight was silent and bloody. I could hear the blow of their tomahawks as they crushed through the skulls, and occasionally the death-cry of one as he fell toppling down the steep sides of the hill. The Konzas gained the battle; they killed them all, though they counted fifty less in their own band. From here you may see the bones of both.—I was then young, like yourself, Herrick. It was the first blood I had ever seen shed, and it made me shiver; though I have since brought the death-yell into the mouth of many

an Indian. You get accustomed to these things.—This is a long *reach* of prairie,” said he abruptly. “It’s easy to travel, but dangerous, for we may be seen by those in pursuit. ’Tis nevertheless our only chance, though a chance which I wish we were well over; for I care not to lay my bones among those that are bleaching on yonder slab-sided hill.”

As they proceeded, he pointed out a long ridge which intersected the prairie, extending as far, both to the north and south, as the eye could reach. “That,” said he, “is called by the whites, the dividing ridge; by the Indians, the backbone of the prairie. All the branches of water to the east of it flow on until they mingle with the muddy stream of the Missouri. Those to the west empty into the Konza. About a mile beyond it, is thick bottom timber. If we reach that before the Indians discover us, we shall baffle them; if not,”—here he drew his finger round the top

of his head—a motion better understood by his companion than relished.

“ If that ’s the case,” said Herrick, “ had we not better run, than keep trailing along at this snail’s pace ?”

“ Snail’s pace !—there is scarcely an Indian could walk with us now. Should we run, we should be worse for it in the end.”

The country over which they were hastening was covered with a succession of long swells of land, apparently rolled like billows, until arrested in their course by the strong barrier formed by the dividing ridge.

By making long circuits to take advantage of the deep hollows, and by avoiding to cross any of the smaller hills, they soon lost sight of the forest of the Nemahaw. At times they were compelled to force their way through tall weeds bordering small runs of impure water at the foot of the hills ; but during these moments little was spoken, Norton by a motion of the hand intimating the direction. The

outline of the woods they sought grew more and more distinct. What at first had been merely a dim tracery against the sky, now assumed a decided character, and long limbs were seen stretching their ragged forms over a thick underwood, which shrouded the lower part of the forest-trees.

They were at the foot of the ridge, when Norton, who was in advance, paused for Herrick to come up.

“ This hill must be crossed,” said he. “ It is the ridge—it is high, and, I fear, may discover us to the Pawnee scouts ; but it is the only path left.”

Herrick made no reply other than a motion of the hand for him to lead on. They had gained the top, and were passing down the opposite side, when a loud whoop rose behind them.

Norton's bright eye flashed fire as he looked back and saw about a dozen Indians following at full speed. “ On our very heels,”

muttered he, griping his gun-barrel. "Run ! run, Herrick ! in God's name ! If we reach the timber, we may make a fight for it ; if not, the prairie will drink more blood, though all of it shall not come from the veins of a white man."

Their quick and powerful leaps soon brought them to the bottom of the hill. They bounded across the small brook of water at its base, and darted up an opposite ascent.

"On, Herrick ! on !" shouted Norton, casting back a hasty glance : "they are like deer. They have gained on us. They are not a quarter of a mile off."

Panting with exertion, they reached the foot of the hill. The forest was not two hundred yards off. They forced their way through the tall rank weeds. They leaped a narrow brook. They reached the dwarf bushes which skirted the woods ; they sprang over the shorter ones, and burst their way through the larger. They were already within fifty yards

of the cover, when a loud whoop rang through the grove in front of them, and an Indian, wrapped in a scarlet blanket, and bearing a short rifle, strode forth.

“ Surrounded, by Heaven ! ” cried Herrick. He sprang back and raised his rifle to his cheek ; but before he had time to pull the trigger, Norton seized the barrel, and turned it upward.

“ Stop, Herrick ! that ’s not a Pawnee ; it ’s a friend. Look at his blanket and rifle. A Konza ! a Konza ! We may keep the devils at bay yet, for he cannot be alone.”

They ran swiftly towards the Konza, who waited their approach.

In the mean time, the Pawnees, who had seen their new ally, fearing lest he should be in company with others, drew up in earnest consultation on the hill, and in a few minutes retreated over its brow.

CHAPTER IV.

Here at this pass the scanty band
Of Ivan's last avengers stand—
Here wait in silence like the dead,
And listen for the Moslem's tread.

Fire Worshipers.

THE Indian who had thus unexpectedly made his appearance, belonged, as Norton had surmised, to the Konza tribe. He was tall, finely formed, but stern and haughty in feature and carriage. His broad chest was partly concealed by a scarlet blanket, thrown over one shoulder, and secured round his waist by a belt of deer-skin. The lower part was so arranged as to form a short skirt, which reach-

ed to the knee in a manner not to impede his progress in travelling. The bare blade of a knife glittered in his girdle, and a steel-headed tomahawk peeped from among the folds of his blanket. His hair was closely shorn, with the exception of a long scalp-lock which hung loosely behind. The crown of his head was striped with alternate streaks of red and black paint. His face, however, was free from colouring of any description, showing to advantage the princely lineaments which so peculiarly distinguish the Konza and Osage Indians.

After the usual salutation of welcome, he stood for a moment with the butt of his gun resting on the ground, and his keen eye wandering over the features of the two white men. At length he spoke, addressing Norton in the Konza tongue.

“ There are red men on the hills,” said he, slowly extending his arm in the direction of the ridge, where the Pawnees had last been

seen. "Have the Omahaws left their lodges?"

"The Omahaw is not on the prairie," replied the other, adopting the manner of his interrogator, and confining himself to answering the questions asked.

"The Sauk wears a blanket and carries a rifle," said the other.

"They are not Sauks or Foxes," replied Norton.

"A friend to the Konza does not stop on the hills. He knows that the hand of the Konza is open to receive him. The white man, too, does not run from a brother of the Konza."

"The Pawnee is no brother of the Konza. He is a wild beast — a wolf," replied Norton.

The Konza chief must doubtless have been surprised by the information that Pawnees, the bitterest foe of his tribe, were so

near. But his countenance betrayed no emotion.

“Has the Pawnee more than one scalp,” said he scornfully, “that he leaves his footprint upon the hunting-ground of the Konza? The Konza has a swift foot, a strong arm, and a keen knife. The young warriors are in these woods, and will answer to a war-whoop. They laugh when they smell Pawnee blood.”

“How many are the Konza warriors?” demanded the hunter.

“Twenty.”

“It will not do,” replied Norton, shaking his head. “At least two hundred Pawnees are on our trail. They are following like carrion birds after a carcass; and before sunset every hill will be covered, and every hollow swarming with them.”

“There is blood upon the white man—has he fought the Pawnee?” said the Indian,

whose keen eye had caught sight of crimson traces on the clothes of Norton.

“He has,” was the stern answer. “Two have gone to their long home. One of them lies in the Nemahaw bottom, and the river is flowing over the other.”

“The white man has no scalps,” said the warrior, who had not been able to discover those indubitable testimonials of an encounter.

“No, Konza ! the white man slays, but he never scalps. 'Tis against his conscience to mutilate.”

The Indian gravely assented ; for any practice whatever, if resulting from conscientious motives, is sacred with a savage.

After a short conversation, in which the Indian was made fully aware of the circumstances of their escape, and of the danger impending over his band, who were hunting in the bottom close at hand, the Konza spoke : “My young men,” said he, “must leave the

deer. The Pawnee has spied them out. They must sharpen their knives."

As he spoke, he uttered a long shrill *whoop*, which made the woods ring.

But a few seconds elapsed before the cry was answered, and yell upon yell was repeated from different quarters; some sharp and shrill, others faint, according to their distance. Presently a number of dark figures darted from different clusters of forest, and moved swiftly in the direction of the Konza chief.

Some gathered silently around him, casting furtive glances at the strangers. Others, however, to whom the hunter, Norton, was known, shook hands with him; a custom learned from the whites.

The chief then spoke a few words apprising them of their danger, at the same time pointing out the hills where the Pawnees had last been seen. When he had finished, he said "Wahcourah !" and extended his arm. A young

warrior left the crowd and started for the ridge. Upon reaching the summit, he loosened his blanket, and cast it from him. He then threw himself on the ground, and slowly dragged his body over the brow.

No sooner was he completely out of sight, than two more went off, one to the right, the other to the left. The whole band watched them until they disappeared, then silently withdrew into the woods, each taking his station behind a tree, or stump, or log.

An hour elapsed without tidings from those sent out. There was, however, no mark of impatience from the savages, although each eye was keenly bent on the horizon. Another half hour elapsed, still no Indians appeared, and still no mark of impatience was visible.

The sun had sunk low in the west, and the lengthened shadows of the trees thrown far upon the prairie gave signs of the approach of evening.

“They have sluggish messengers,” said

Herrick, who with Norton had stationed himself behind the trunk of a fallen sycamore, and who was beginning to grow impatient of the silence and inaction around him. "They may have met with Pawnee arrows!"

"Scarcely! A Konza is too quick-eyed to run upon an enemy, when he is on the watch for one. Their absence bodes no good."

"It denotes, at least," replied Herrick, "that the enemies are far off."

"Not at all; were they far off, the Konzas would have left them. They are so near, that the scouts are afraid to come in without being certain of their movements. I fear me, we shall have a glimpse of the whole troop before we are safely out of their clutches."

"Ugh!" burst from the chest of an old Indian next him. At this exclamation, never uttered without a meaning, the whole band turned their eyes in the direction pointed out by his extended arm. At the distance of a few hundred yards, one of the last couriers

was running in at a point opposite that from which he had started. He brushed swiftly through the bushes, and went directly to the chief.

He had discovered the Pawnee band, which had united in consultation, and after some time spent in debate had divided into small parties, which scattered through every ravine and hollow, and were stealing cautiously towards the retreat of the Konzas.

A moment after, another exclamation announced the approach of a second scout. He confirmed the tidings of the first. Only one now remained—the young Indian who had started first. It was Wahcourah, the son of the old man who had discovered the first messenger—the only son. The painted face of the aged warrior showed no trace of emotion, but the earnestness with which his starting eye was fixed upon the spot where his son had disappeared spoke his feelings.

In a short time, an exclamation burst from

one of the band, and the eye of the old man lighted up, as he saw his son bounding over the brow of the hill. But the joy was momentary. It was instantly manifest that his motions were jaded—that he strained, as if hard pressed by some pursuer. He reached the spot where his blanket lay, and without pausing sprang over it. The next instant, five Indians appeared in full pursuit: they gained upon him, leaping forward with long and powerful bounds. One brawny savage had outstripped the rest, and was within twenty yards of him, when Wahcourah turned suddenly and fired. The report of his rifle rang through the forest, and the Pawnee fell headlong on the prairie. Another pursuer let fly an arrow—it missed. Another followed, and pierced the fleshy part of the fugitive's arm. Still he sprang on. A third was more successful: it entered his thigh and stopped his speed, and the Pawnee overtook him. The next instant they had grappled.

The contest, however, was far from equal. The slender agile frame of the wounded Konza could not resist the giant strength of his antagonist; he sank beneath him, and the Pawnee had already seized his scalp-lock, when Herrick raised his rifle to his cheek and fired. The ball whistled through the air, and the Pawnee, relaxing his hold, fell dead to the ground.

“Well done, Herrick! Well done!” exclaimed Norton, who had watched the chase with an interest that equalled his own. “It was a desperate shot, above a hundred yards.”

“It was his only chance,” replied Herrick. “The others would have been upon him in a minute. You see the fate of their friend has damped their ardour; they have paused on yon hill.”

Whilst Herrick was speaking, the aged Indian beside him seized his hand and pressed it against his naked breast. Then relaxing it, his features became as calm and cold as ever, and he resumed his unmoved attitude.

“ You have saved that old man’s son,” said Norton. “ You have made a firm friend—an Indian never forgets a favour or an injury.”

Immediately upon gaining the thicket, the young warrior made his report to the chief. He then extracted the arrows, which were neither of them deeply bedded in the flesh, and bound up the wounds with a piece of dressed deer-skin. After this he took his station behind one of the trees to watch the movements of their foes.

Group after group of fierce Pawnees came crowding on the hill. Many had stood quietly watching the result of the fight between their warrior and the Konza, apparently certain that the fate of the latter was sealed. But when an unknown bullet hurled their champion in the dust, and at the same time apprised them of the station of their foes, a shrill yell of fury burst from the whole band. It was answered by a whoop of defiance from the Konzas.

“ That’s Indian to the backbone,” said

Norton ; “ a Redskin will have his yell if he dies for it. That war-cry sounded very meagre when compared with a whoop of the Pawnees. It betrays our weakness and position to those cut-throats. They will skulk down every hollow, and behind every bush, until close upon us. Then look out for hot work. You will need a stout heart—and above all a cool head ; don’t be fluttered—it spoils the aim. Do you see that tall fellow in front of the Pawnee group, with his robe thrown over his arm, and his war-club in his hand ? That’s the young chief of the Pawnees. His Indian name is Sharatack—though he is known to the French half-breeds as ‘ *Le Jeune Faucon*,’ —the Young Hawk ; and so the hunters call him the Young Hawk Chief. He is little more than a boy, but fierce in battle, and withal the most valiant and generous of that tribe. He is bitter against the whites. I had rather any other led the band.”

The person thus designated stood by him-

self upon a small swell in the prairie, about midway between his own band and the Konzas, but beyond the reach of the bullets of the latter. His object evidently was to ascertain the exact position of the Konzas; nor was it long before he retired, apparently satisfied, throwing back cautious glances towards the lurking-place of his enemies.

A short consultation took place between him and his warriors, and the whole band, scattering, disappeared behind the neighbouring hills.

“The Hawk will not swoop to-day,” said Herrick, who could not account for this manœuvre. “He is flying.”

“Yes, but towards us,” replied Norton. “It is not always the straightest path that is the surest or the quickest. You may be certain that some devil’s mischief is hatching behind that hill. Sharatack is not the one to let his prey escape: in battle he is a devil incarnate.

“This arm of timber,” said he after a moment’s pause, “in which our red friend has chosen to abide the result of a fight, is not, in my opinion, the best he could have pitched upon. There is room for a troop of Indians between us and the main forest. They can cut off all retreat, except into the open prairie. I suspect that the Pawnees have guessed our position, and are sending off parties for that very purpose. You see the Konza leader is not satisfied.”

As he spoke, Norton pointed to the Indian. He was sitting upon a dead stump, with his rifle in the hollow of one arm, while the elbow of the other, which supported his chin, rested upon his bare and sinewy knee. His brow was knit as with deep and anxious thought, and although his face was as unmoved as chiselled marble, still there was something about it that spoke of mental trouble. His eyes were fixed on the dead leaves at his feet, though he occasionally raised them and took a sweeping

glance from left to right, scanning the whole horizon. His uncertainty, if such it were, was of short duration. A low word brought two Indians to his side. An earnest consultation took place, and from the low muttered sound of assent, it was evident that the remarks of the leader met with a ready approval. He then rose and called several of the younger warriors. Among them was Wahcourah, the one who had just been wounded.

The Konza turned towards him. "The young warrior was wounded," said he. "Was the hurt deep? Has Wahcourah sharpened his knife? Can he fight the Pawnee? Or is his arm weak, that he must lie quiet like a crippled wolf?"

There was something in the tone that brought the fire into the eye of the young Indian.

"The sun of twenty summers," answered he haughtily, "has shone upon Wahcourah, and he has become a warrior. Did ever a war-

party leave the Konza town, that he did not join? Did ever an Osage or Pawnee meet him on the prairie, and live to tell the tale? Has he never felt the blow of a knife? Look!" said he, pressing his hand upon his bare breast, which bore the marks of many scars; "these came from the knives of the Osages and the arrows of the Pawnees. Twenty gashes have seamed the body of Wahcourah in one fight, and still his whoop was heard. The blood that he has lost to-day has made him strong. He will fight the Pawnee."

A murmur of approbation followed this characteristic eulogy of himself.

"Wahcourah has spoken like a warrior," replied the chief calmly. "Let him listen. The Pawnee is a wolf. He hides in the woods, and dreams that he is stealing upon a wounded deer. Let my young men go down into the thicket. He shall tread upon a rattlesnake, whose bite is death.

A gleam of ferocity shot athwart the dusky

faces of the group as he concluded, and without further delay, they stole silently through the bushes. The chief then resumed his station and his watch upon the prairie.

CHAPTER V.

There came of every race the mingled swarm,
Far rang the groves, and gleamed the midnight grass
With flambeau, javelin, and naked arm.

Gertrude of Wyoming.

For an hour after the warriors had departed on their errand, the little spot which concealed the Konza band was hushed into as deep and silent a stillness as if it had never known the presence of man. The evening had grown pitchy dark. The singing of the insects in the trees was distinctly audible, and occasionally the startling whoop of some distant owl came harshly through the air; but there was no human sound to tell the deadly purposes

which were hidden in that spot. The forms of the Indians were dimly visible as they remained like statues at their posts; — some crouching behind large prostrate logs, and others maintaining their upright stand as unmoved as the tall trunks which sheltered them. Cold and stone-like as they seemed, there was not an eye but was bent with earnest gaze upon the prairie; not an ear but was open to listen; and not a hand but grasped its rifle.

Long experience in forest warfare had taught them to be silent and watchful. What they had learned from necessity, they practised from habit; and though each man stood ready to do his duty, the grove that held them was silent as the tomb.

Minute after minute passed, still there was no appearance of attack.

Some length of time had thus elapsed, when the chief rose up and raised his hand to his ear, as if engaged in profound listening. He

stood so for some seconds, then dropped to his former position.

A moment, however, had not elapsed before he was again upon his feet.

“Is any thing stirring?” whispered Herrick to Norton. “I hear nothing.”

“Nor I; but an Indian’s senses are keener than a white man’s. They can almost hear the footstep of a fly. There’s something abroad, depend upon it. All we have to do is to keep silent, and have a sharp eye about us.”

The chief apparently had cause for his alertness; for a moment after the last words of the hunter, a long low howl came from the woods, some distance down the branch.

“It’s only a wolf,” muttered Herrick.

“Ay! but a frightened one,” replied Norton. “There must have been cause for his howl. It is the cry of a wolf driven from his carcass. We shall know more presently.”

A sudden light flashed through the distant

thicket. The reverberating report of a rifle followed, accompanied by a faint scream.

“There goes a death yell,” muttered Norton; “and there goes the whoop of his comrades,” said he, as a loud cry of many blended voices answered the first. A second rifle-shot followed, and a third; then came another yell still fiercer than the first.

Scarcely was it hushed, before a whoop equally fearful, and seemingly from an equally numerous body, answered from the opposite side of the arm of forest, giving to those concealed the first intimation that they were surrounded.

This time, however, no war-cry answered from the Konzas. Each warrior crouched close to his lair, and quietly raised the muzzle of his gun for action. Norton did the same.

“Now, Herrick,” said he, “let nothing escape you. Put a bullet into the first thing that stirs in the prairie.—Hist!—there’s something now. Is that a bush?—No, no; it

moves. It must be a Pawnee. A Konza would not risk himself there. Here goes !”

The last words and the discharge of his rifle were simultaneous. A low hysterical sound followed, and an armed Pawnee, rendered crazy by a death-wound, bounded forward, and fell dead in the very heart of the Konza band.

The flash of the rifle made the Konzas aware of their danger. By its light they discovered a number of naked forms skulking through the bushes. The quick reports of a dozen rifles announced the discovery, and the loud yell of several enemies told the fatal effect of the fire.

A volley of arrows answered the discharge. They pierced the trees, and stood quivering in the trunks, but wounded no one.

Then followed the crash of bushes, as the repulsed Pawnees hastily retreated beyond the reach of the rifles of the Konzas.

The besieged party, however, had scarcely

•

time to congratulate themselves on this temporary relief, when a number of arrows whizzed among them from a different quarter.

“From the way that arrow stands in this log,” said Norton, taking hold of one bedded in a tree about a foot from him, “I judge that it was shot from behind us. The devils, no doubt, are between us and the main timber; and if so, I don’t see how we are to get off without exterminating the whole Pawnee band—a thing not altogether easy.”

Herrick had not been long enough inured to peril, to appreciate the calm calculations of his companion. He therefore made no reply either to his premises or to his conclusion.

In the mean time, two or three Konzas glided from their posts. Crouching close to the ground, they crept among the dark under-wood, taking a direction likely to bring them upon their last assailants.

Suddenly an exclamation as of surprise arose at a short distance. It was followed by

the report of two rifles. A heavy jarring sound, as of a body falling to the ground, succeeded; but there was no cry. The prairie too was hushed; not a voice was heard—not a foot-fall.

Whilst the silence was deepest, the long bay of a wolf sounded through the night air.

“That brute scents the dead already. He’ll have rare picking among the Pawnee carcasses,” said Norton, half musingly. “The idea of being mangled by the fangs of a wild beast has something terrible in it.”

His disagreeable train of ideas was interrupted by a volley of arrows, one of which slightly wounded a Konza at his side. At the same time, from the noise, it was evident that a rush was making towards them. The Konzas in silence awaited the coming attack. The noise grew louder. The Pawnees were within fifty feet, when they were met by a volley of bullets. They wavered. At that instant, to the astonishment of both parties,

the flashes of half a dozen rifles were seen on the prairie. Their reports followed, accompanied by a yell from the Pawnees.

The hum of voices busy in consultation was heard. Another volley was poured from the rifles of the besieged, in the direction of the sound. Again the prairie blazed up for an instant, and an echoing volley was poured in by the stranger band. The besiegers paused, then retired hastily through the bushes.

The Konza chief called one of the young men to him, and spoke a few words in a low tone. The Indian immediately stole towards the prairie. He soon returned to the band, and a low conversation took place between him and the leader, who then came to where Norton was stationed.

“Are those Konzas who are firing from the prairie?” demanded the hunter.

The Indian nodded assent.

“How came they there?—Who are they?”

“It is Wahcourah!” was the answer.

“Ay! he’s a noble fellow,” replied the hunter. “He has stolen round those Pawnees and done good service.”

When the chief saw that Norton had nothing more to say, he spoke:—

“The path is clear—the Pawnee is lying in the woods, wounded and tired, but he longs for blood. The moon is sleeping in the big waters to the east. The Konza must be on his travel before she rises. For when the moon lights up the woods, the Pawnee will be again looking for his prey.—Are my words good?”

“There’s no gainsaying that,” said Norton. “If we are to save our scalps, it must be done soon. When the Pawnees have light to fight by, they will play the devil with us.” These last words were muttered to himself in English. Then, speaking to the chief, he answered—“The words of the Konza are good.—My ears are open.—Let the young men be upon their march, before they have an enemy

upon their trail. Let them be as silent as the snake, and let their legs move as swiftly as the deer."

The other nodded assent, and then uttered a few words to the troop, who silently followed him as he threaded his way through the thicket into the prairie. They flitted along almost without sound, until they reached the spot where Wahcourah, with his few companions, lay ensconced in a hollow.

Half a dozen words made known to him the intentions of the chief. He immediately rose up and passed along with the rest of his little band over the top of a swelling hill.

The march was swift. The retreating party seemed to glide like shadows across the burnt black waste. They passed in Indian file down a hollow, following the motions of their chief.

There was not even the sound of a foot-fall, or the crash of unburnt stubble as they moved across it. Occasionally, however, the leader

gave directions in a deep low tone. These were rare and momentary, and when uttered their march was silent as ever. Sometimes he would pause to listen for any sound of pursuit.

Nearly two hours had elapsed. Many miles had been thrown between them and the scene of action. But it was not until the broad disk of the moon was rising over the hills that they rested in their flight. So sudden and so cautious had been their departure from the thicket—so desperate and swift had been the retreat, that it was not until they were completely out of danger that the fearfulness of their past peril seemed to flash upon them.

When stealing into the prairie, they momentarily expected to hear the Pawnee war-whoop. But the very boldness of their movements had been their preservation. They now reached a group of trees surrounded by bushes, growing upon the ragged bank of a small rivulet.

Under these trees they halted, not for the purpose of repose ; for the short distance of twelve miles bore but lightly on the active frame of a savage, or the hardened sinews of a prairie hunter.

The object of the halt was to deliberate on the next steps to be taken. When all had collected, several of the oldest warriors gathered round the leader in earnest debate. The younger ones threw themselves upon the long dry grass, which being at this place protected by the bushes, had escaped the general conflagration. Norton took this opportunity to open a small wallet which hung at his back, and partake of the first refreshment he had eaten since morning. The supply was scanty, and as the Indians shared it, was soon exhausted.

“ There’s nothing like a long walk over the prairie to give a keen relish to your dried deer’s flesh,” said Norton, as he finished his mastication of the last piece. “ I have lived

in the settlements for years, and have eaten fine spiced dishes, jellies and syllabubs, and a thousand other kickshaws whose names I don't remember. I have drunk of the wines which came from across the sea, and are brought up for the tables of the rich. I have slept upon soft feather beds. But never have I eaten a better meal than dried venison without any kind of seasoning ; never have I drunk a sweeter draught than the pure water which God has placed upon the prairie ; never have I enjoyed a sounder sleep than on the dry ground after a hard day's travel across these hills. And when I have been lying there, I would not have changed my place with the richest man in the settlement, saving now and then when I have been hard pushed to save my scalp from the knives of the Omahaws or Pawnees, and sometimes the straggling bands of Sioux. These last, however, seldom came down into this part of the country."

This homily might have proceeded much

further, but for the Konza leader, who called to him.

A few long strides brought Norton into the midst of the Indian group. All seemed waiting for his presence to decide some weighty and debated question.

The leader first spoke, pointing in the direction of Konza river. It was evident from his movements that he advocated a course towards its forests. He described by his gestures the secure shelter of its groves, the thick underwood, the difficulty of their enemies in following their trail, and lastly their own final escape.

When he had finished, one of the others advocated, with the same descriptiveness of gesture, a course in the direction of the Nemahaw. Both then waited for the opinion of Norton. His speech, when addressing them, abounded nearly as much in gesticulation as their own. It was evident that he too advocated the passage in the direction of the

Konza river recommended by the chief. When he had concluded, he stepped back a few paces, and leaned against one of the trees, waiting the result. After a few earnest words, all seemed to agree with the leader. They wrapped their blankets closely round their shoulders, and resuming their rifles, left the spot. They now made for a dark outline of trees which pointed out the course of the Konza. These were rendered faintly visible by the soft rays of the moon sailing up the heavens, surrounded by a full tide of silver light.

CHAPTER VI.

Leonato. What would you with me, honest neighbour ?

Dogberry. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leonato. Brief, I pray you ; for you see 'tis a busy time with me.

Dogberry. Marry, this it is, sir.

Much Ado about Nothing.

WE must now change the scene of our narrative from the waste of burnt prairie to the more luxuriant, though scarcely more civilized, shores of the Konza river.

Upon the banks of this powerful tributary of the Missouri, and within a short distance of the water, stood the Konza agency. It was a half savage white settlement, about sixty miles beyond the verge of civilization,

and about the same distance from the fierce tribe of Indians from whom it took its name. It was the business of the agent to attend to the payment of annuities given by the government to keep the savages quiet, and at the same time to have an eye on their actions, and give warning of any hostile movement. Three cabins built of unbarked logs, and thrown together in the rudest style of architecture, composed the dwellings of the workmen belonging to the agency. A little apart from the rest stood a house of larger dimensions, but scarcely more finished in its construction. This was the dwelling of the agent.

Attached to it was a large field of Indian corn, almost the only grain raised by a backwoodsman; and in front was a small yard, surrounded by a slender white railing. Not only the corn-field, but a large space around the hamlet was filled with burnt and scathed trunks, giving intimation that a luxuriant growth of giant forest-trees had once covered

the spot, but had yielded to the unsparing inroads of man.

In front of the largest dwelling two large gaunt dogs were lazily dozing on the ground, and so seldom disturbed by the visit of a stranger, that they scarcely deemed it worth while to keep watch. These were the only living things to be seen.

It was yet early in the morning ; the earth was covered with sparkling flakes of white frost, which the rays of the sun had not yet acquired sufficient force to dissolve. The sky was clear and unclouded, and foretold a soft autumnal Indian-summer day.

A thin line of blue smoke floated gracefully above the different dwellings, announcing that the inhabitants were stirring ; and presently the door of the large house opened, and a man emerged from it. He stood for a short time as if fully sensible of the coolness of the air, and after bestowing a few caresses on the dogs, which went fawning up to him, he

raised the latch of the gate and walked in front of the hamlet, followed by his shaggy friends. He was a tall thin man, of that hardened appearance which rather denotes extreme toughness, than great muscular strength. His hair was snowy white. His forehead was high and narrow, and his nose aquiline. His light blue eyes, half extinguished by two heavy lids, betokened calm reflection. His mouth was large, firmly set, and surmounted by two or three deeply-furrowed wrinkles. There was something in his look that betokened a man of resolution, bordering upon obstinacy. He was dressed in a deer-skin hunting-shirt, trimmed, after the Indian fashion, with a border of bear's hair, and ornamented with porcupine quills.

His pantaloons were of coarse cloth, such as is universally worn by frontier men. In his hand he held a large cap of fox-skin, so constructed that the snarling head of the animal was preserved, and appeared to be keep-

ing guard over the cranium of the wearer.

This was General Ashton, the Indian agent.

For some moments he walked up and down, with his hands thrust in his pockets, for the sake of warmth, when the door of one of the cabins opened, and a man came forth and joined him.

The new-comer was short and broad-shouldered, with a black beard of a week's growth. He was dressed in a broad-brimmed felt hat of considerable antiquity, a ragged blue round jacket, and an equally ragged pair of trousers. His begrimed face and sooty hands bespoke his calling—the blacksmith of the agency.

“A fine frosty morning, Walton,” said the agent.

“Ay, general; and one that speaks the approach of winter.”

“Have you yet sent to the settlements for your winter's provisions?”

“No,” returned the other; “I have been

waiting for Rishtah to return from hunting on the Nemahaw. He has been gone a week. The deer are plenty on that branch."

"Well, Walton," said the agent, "when do you expect him? These things must be brought up before snows set in. It's hard travelling across these prairies in winter."

"He has got back. He returned this morning; and it was a tale of his that sent me out to look for you."

"What tale?"

"He had been hunting on the Nemahaw until he had killed as much venison as he wanted. So he loaded his mules and stretched across the dividing ridge to strike a branch of the Konza. He reached it at night, and camped in one of the bottoms. He had scarcely kindled a fire to roast his supper, when he heard the crack of a rifle a great way off. After it there was such a screeching and screaming, that he supposed there must have been near five hundred Indians

around him. He threw water on his fire, tied his mule, and went to find out who they might be. When he got near enough, he could hear whoops and yells, and the rattling of guns from a party shut up in the woods. He knows that some were Pawnees; but who the others with the fire-arms were, he can't count upon."

The agent heard him out, and then turned off with a gesture of impatience. "Walton, I thought you knew better than to let that fellow impose upon you with such a fool's tale."

"A fool's tale! general."

"Ay! a fool's tale. What could call a band of Pawnees to the Nemahaw, where every tribe would raise its hand against them, and where the chances are ten to one they would be seen by some of them?"

"I thought so myself, general, and I tell'd him so; but he says there are full five hundred, and that they could keep off all the

scattering bands the neighbouring Indians could raise. Them Pawnees is very numerous."

"It may be so," replied the agent: "but is Rishtah sure they were Pawnees? They might have been Otoes or Konzas."

"He says," replied Walton, "that they were either Pawnees or Mahaws; and he says that he heard a scattering fire through the bottom the whole of yesterday morning."

The general bent his eyes to the ground, for some moments, in deep thought.

"Is Rishtah here?"

"He is in my house."

"Send him to me."

The blacksmith retired, and in a few moments returned, followed by an Indian, whose strong lineaments at once spoke him a Konza, though evidently more civilized than most of his tribe. His head was shaven like the rest; but instead of displaying his naked shoulders and breast, he wore a calico shirt, a sash of

scarlet worsted round his waist, and leggins of coarse blue cloth. A large blue blanket was thrown over his shoulders. He strode boldly after his guide, until he came opposite the general. Here he paused, and drawing himself up, awaited his questions.

“Rishtah,” said the general, speaking in the Konza language, “you have been hunting upon the Nemahaw?”

“Rishtah has hunted upon the Nemahaw,” replied the Indian.

“You have brought news of a party of Pawnees prowling round that part of the country. Can this be true?”

A gleam of pride, somewhat allied to anger, shot across his face as he answered, “Rishtah has spoken the truth.”

“Are there many?” demanded the agent.

The Indian raised his arm, and pointed to the tall linden which overhung them: “So many.”

“You speak boldly. How know you they

were Pawnees? The night was dark, and you were far off in a different bottom. They might have been Otoes or Konzas."

"An Indian has legs—he can walk. He has eyes—he can see," replied Rishtah scornfully.

"What mean you? Don't speak in riddles," said the agent angrily.

"The truth is always a riddle to the pale face," replied the other fiercely. At the same time he slid his hand beneath his blanket and grasped the handle of a knife, ready to act in the defensive.

The other observed the motion, and was aware of his mistake in speaking thus to the proud Konza. He therefore continued his questions without appearing to notice his remark or action.

"You saw these Indians? — Who were they?"

"Rishtah lay hid in the woods," answered the other coldly. "He crept to the spot

where the red men were watching in the prairie. He hid himself in the bushes. The moon looked out of the heavens, and he saw them. They were Pawnees."

"And those whom they watched," asked the general, "who were they?"

"Rishtah does not know," was the answer. "When the moon rose, the Pawnee skulked down upon them, but they were gone."

"Gone! Escaped! Is it so?"

"Rishtah has said it," responded the Indian.

"Where did they go? — In what direction?"

"They followed the flowing of the Konza."

"Then both parties will come upon us," exclaimed the agent. "Should they fight it out here, the agency might suffer. I would prefer they had kept to the woods."

"The Pawnee will not come," said the Konza coldly.

"How know you that?"

"The Pawnee is a coward," was the quiet answer.

"He means," interrupted Walton, who had been standing by, an attentive listener, "that they will be afraid to follow when they find that the party have escaped to the houses. Is not that it, Rishtah?"

"An arrow will not pierce a tree," replied the Indian, pointing to the logs that formed the houses.

A pause in the dialogue succeeded, while the agent paced up and down with hasty strides. The blacksmith watched with deep interest the varying expression of his countenance, but the Indian retained his calm demeanour, regarding with an eye of scorn the working features of the man whom he had been told to consider a superior.

"Should these Indians come," at length said the agent, addressing Walton, "we have arms, and can keep them at bay until a reinforcement could arrive from Wolf Hill

cantonment: — unless they should fire the houses.”

“ I think,” replied Walton, “ that Rishtah knows more about their movements than we do. He says they will not trouble us, and I’m inclined to believe him. He has seen much Indian service, and is not likely to be out in his calculations. I’ll answer for it, he can tell what course these Pawnees took. An Indian is not apt to leave a hostile trail till he finds out the movements of those who made it. Nor is he apt to give information unless questions are asked.”

In pursuance of this advice, the agent once more addressed the savage. “ Are the Pawnees on the track of the fugitives ? ”

“ The Pawnee has left the trail,” replied Rishtah. “ He has turned his course to the spot where the waters of the branches run towards the rising sun.”

“ How did you learn this ? ”

“ Rishtah followed the trail,” replied the

Konza. "It was broad — there were many foot-prints. It turned away to the Nemahaw."

"And are you sure they were Pawnees who made it?"

A smile of scorn passed over the face of the savage, as he answered—"The elk runs over the hills and leaves his track in the ashes of the prairie. The buffalo dashes over the ground and his hoof leaves its mark. Let the white man say, does Rishtah know the track of the elk from that of the buffalo?" He paused as if expecting an answer.

"It is easy for any one who has lived on the prairies to know that," answered the other.

"It is as easy to know the trail of a Pawnee from that of another tribe, as to tell the track of a buffalo from that of an elk."

"Well! I'm glad to hear it," replied the other, in English, apparently relieved from a burden of apprehension.

"And the fugitives, where are they?"

The Indian raised his arm and pointed

down a narrow irregular path, leading from the woods into the small clearing which surrounded the agency—"Here!"

The agent, who stood with his eyes fixed on the face of the savage, now turned them in the direction pointed out.

Three persons were approaching through the wood, following the devious windings of the narrow path, occasionally hid by the intervening bushes and tree trunks, and again plainly visible as they reached some small glade or opening in the forest. The attire of the two first marked them as whites, while the half-naked figure of the third, with the bright red blanket, bespoke him a native of the wilderness.

The agent, after casting a cursory glance towards them, turned to Rishtah.

"These cannot be the men. They could not have kept at bay the Indians you saw. They would have been crushed in an instant. Speak! how do you explain this?"

There was no immediate reply. The Indian stood regarding earnestly the three comers—more particularly the savage. After having satisfied himself, he turned to the agent with the same cold air that he almost invariably maintained—

“There were many rifles in the forest, yet here are but three—nevertheless, the words of Rishtah are true. The buffaloes keep in herds when the wolf is near; but when he is away, they scatter. The Pawnee is the wolf—the pale faces are the buffaloes. Are my words good? are the ears of the Long Knife open?” said he, addressing the agent by the name by which he was generally known to the Indians, although the same title was not unfrequently applied to the whites in general.

“What you say is probable; but perhaps the strangers can furnish some clew.”

As he spoke, he moved towards them. “Welcome, strangers, to the Konza agency. Its houses are few, its comforts fewer, but such as they are you may command them.”

The elder of the two raised his cap in token of respect, as he answered—"It is not for us, who have slept seven nights under the blue heaven, to find fault with any roof that shelters us."

"Ha! Norton, is it you? I did not recognize you," said the general, warmly shaking him by the hand. "What! Herrick Ostrand, you here too! This is a piece of good fortune I did not expect. How left you the occupants of the trading establishment? Are you not tired of the mad fondness for strange sights that sent you rambling through a country like this?"

"No! by my faith; no, general," responded Herrick; "there's a wild excitement in it that I never before experienced. It is true, arrows and scalping-knives are slight drawbacks."

"They are so," replied the agent, laughing; "but, believe me, were the arrow and scalping-knife out of the way, the excitement would perish with them. Where did you

pick up yon Indian? A Konza by his paint, and haughty as a king. Let's have a look at his face," said he, striding towards the savage, who was leaning against the charred trunk of a tree, with his back towards them. "Ha! the Black Wolf!"

"The Black Wolf!" ejaculated both Her-
rick and Norton, as the name of a distinguish-
ed and ferocious chief of the Konza tribe was
mentioned.

"Ay! the Black Wolf!" replied the agent.
"The country rings with his name."

"So," said Norton, examining closely his
stately and powerful frame, "this is the sa-
vage whose war-whoop is dreaded by almost
every Indian on these prairies, from the Sioux
down to the Cherokee, in the Arkansaw. I
suspect there is but one Redskin who would
like to meet him."

"Who is that?" asked the agent: "he must
be a bold fellow."

"It is the Young Hawk Chief, of the Paw-
nees."

“Ha! Sharatack!—I have heard of him. He is brave as a lion,” said the agent.

“Yes, and ferocious as a panther,” replied Norton. “Had we not fallen in with this chief and his band of Konzas, our scalps might have been dangling at the belt of some of the Young Hawk’s band. They tried our wind sadly. My hair began to feel very uneasy; my scalp fairly quaked. You may think yourself fortunate, general, in seeing us with our hair growing as Nature placed it. Nor do I care that it should meet with molestation from the best Redskin that ever breathed.”

“That is strange, too,” said the agent, smiling, and at the same time raising his cap, and running his fingers through his own white locks. “Where did you leave the rest of the Konzas? You have here only the leader.”

“It’s hard telling where an Indian is when he has once left you in the prairie. I overheard the chief sending some to warn the vil-

lage, and raise a band of warriors. Others were directed to skulk after the Pawnees, and keep track of their movements. These last are now outlying on their trail. It will go hard, but the Konzas will have some of their scalps smoking in their wigwams ere the week is over."

"They must raise a large force," answered the agent: "Rishtah says that there are full five hundred Pawnees in the band."

"About two hundred, I should think," responded the hunter. "He has been deceived by their howling. To tell the truth, they did little more than whoop and yell, occasionally sending a few arrows to keep us awake."

"Rishtah has probably been deceived. I have never yet known him to swerve from the truth," replied the general.

"It may be so, for they made noise enough for five thousand."

"How many men did you lose in the skirmish?"

“None,” replied Norton. “We kept them off until night, when we escaped in the darkness. When the moon rose, we must have been many miles off.”

“But Rishtah speaks of shots fired during the whole of yesterday morning.”

“Only a few deer started by the young men,” was the answer.

“And the Black Wolf, why is he not with the rest of the band?”

“I know not,” answered the hunter, looking towards the savage, who was still leaning against the dead tree. “He must have reasons, for he is not a man to act without them.”

The agent walked up to the Indian. “The Black Wolf,” said he, addressing him, “is welcome to the lodge of the Long Knife.”

The Indian slowly bent his head forward, in token that he heard the words, and was ready to listen to what further the agent might have to say.

“The Black Wolf,” continued the other,
“has fought the Pawnees?”

“He has,” was the answer.

“And followed upon his trail?”

The Indian gravely nodded.

“Where are they now?”

He raised his hand and pointed to the east.

“On the Nemahaw.”

“On the Great or Little Nemahaw?”

“On the Big Nemahaw,” replied the Indian.

“Are the Konza warriors upon their trail?”

“They are following the Pawnee footprints.”

“Yet the Black Wolf is not with his warriors,” said the general.

The Indian raised his arm and shook from it his robe, as he answered, “The young men of the Konza were hunting in the thicket, when two strangers sought their encampment for protection. The Pawnees were in chase. They came upon the Konza, and the Konza

drove them off. He saved the white men. He has brought them safe to the dwelling of their brother. His task is done. He will follow the Pawnees."

"Stop!" said the general; "you must eat with us, ere we part."

It is a part of an Indian's creed never to refuse food, as he knows not when another meal may offer. The Konza, therefore, assented, and the party entered the house of the agent, with the exception of Walton and Rishtah, who wended their way towards the dwelling of the former.

CHAPTER VII.

Then forth uprose that lone wayfaring man ;
But dauntless he, nor chart nor journey's plan
In woods required, whose strained eye was keen
As eagle of the wilderness, to scan
His path, by mountain, swamp, or deep ravine,
Or ken far friendly huts on good savannas green.

CAMPBELL.

It was late in the afternoon of the same day that Norton, Herrick, and General Ashton, the agent, were travelling briskly along a narrow path in the forest skirting the Konza river. They were all mounted upon Indian ponies, a species of horse much used in the western section of the country, on account of

an extreme hardness of constitution, which enables them to set at defiance both fatigue and hunger. For this reason they are preferred in pushing across the prairies, where long journeys are sometimes unavoidable, and where, in the fall of the year, the annual fires leave a dearth of forage to a mettlesome charger, but a sufficient support to the hardy Indian pony.

About a hundred yards in front of them was Black Wolf, the Konza chief. He was not mounted, but kept in advance with a swift though easy pace, occasionally pausing to survey the intricacies of the surrounding forest, or raising his head to listen, as some distant noise echoed through its arches. The pace at which he moved, though it caused but little exertion to himself, obliged the whites to keep their horses at a fast trot to hold him in sight. This was particularly necessary, because in many places the path was very faint, and at times completely invisible to a person unacquainted with its windings.

More than once the Indian had got so far in advance, that they thought he had left them ; and several times, when almost hopeless of again seeing him, they would catch a glimpse of his scarlet blanket fluttering some distance in front. In places where the trail grew almost imperceptible, he would pause and lean lazily against a tree till they overtook him. He would then point out its course, and again start forward at the same swift but unwearying pace. His directions were by signs, and not once did he speak.

Thus an hour passed in silence, except when a word of encouragement was addressed to the horses, or a sharp rebuke escaped a rider, as his steed stumbled along the rugged path. As the forest grew more rough the trace became more indistinct and difficult. At length, after a mile of slow travel, they came to a bank that shelved suddenly down to a small swift stream, dashing in a sheet of foam, amid masses of broken rock.

The Indian did not pause, but, springing down, leaped from stone to stone, until he reached more than half-way across the brook. Here he seized the long projecting branch of a tree, and with a powerful effort swung himself upon the opposite bank.

There being no resource for the horsemen but to follow him as well as they could, with some difficulty they forced their horses down the steep. The rugged little animals carefully picked their way across the foaming stream, and mounted the opposite ascent.

“These Indian nags are powerful for their size,” said the agent, patting the neck of the sturdy animal that bore him.

“They are, general,” replied Norton, “and surefooted too. I’ve seen them climb places in the mountains which it would puzzle a man to ascend, even with his hands to aid him. The trappers sometimes carry ponies with them ; but, after all, a mule is the best for that life. There is *no tire* about a mule—he will

almost live by licking the bare stones, and will climb rocks like a goat."

The conversation again dropped, nor was it until the lapse of nearly half an hour that it was renewed, when the agent spoke.

"What has set these Pawnees against us? It was but three months ago that a treaty was made with them, giving them blankets, powder, and rifles, to secure their friendship."

"The blankets are worn out," replied Norton; "the powder is used up; and the rifles and treaty have both been broken together. An Indian has a bad memory in such matters. He does not like to think them over when he has nothing to gain by them."

"They commenced, I suppose, in the usual way; by killing and robbing?" said the agent.

"They did so. A hunter belonging to the trading establishment was the first."

"Ah! who was he?"

"Jean Lafêche, the half-breed, who was travelling to the Otoe agency, with rifles."

“Ha ! Laflêche ! Did they strip *him* of his burden ? He’s not a man to part with his trust easily.”

“He did not,” replied the hunter, grating his teeth. “He did not. He resisted, and they butchered him.”

“Killed him ?”

“Ay ! They demanded his load. He refused it. They attacked him ; pulled him from his horse ; and tore his scalp from his head. After stripping him, they left him mangled on the prairie. I passed some hours after and found him. He was still breathing, and had barely time to tell his tale before he died. Not half an hour had passed, before, with half a dozen men, besides Herrick, I came up with the party. There were ten of them. We killed seven almost before they knew we were upon their trail. One of them was the man who scalped poor Laflêche. He was running over the top of a hill, with a scalp hanging to his girdle. It was the last he ever

took; for as I caught sight of it, I sent a bullet through his skull, and put an end to his deviltry for ever."

"Poor Laflèche!" said the general, in a more melancholy tone than was his wont. "He was an honest fellow—an old man too. His hair must have been long since grey. It was hard that he should die by the hand of violence. The agency has lost a worthy man."

"It has, general," replied Norton, while a tremor played over his hardened features. "He was a father to me. He taught me to use the rifle; to break the wild horse; and when we were in the mountains together, he once was near falling into the hands of the Blackfeet, because he stopped to aid me who was wounded. I cannot forget it, general. I was alone in the world, and he assisted me. But it can't be helped now. He is gone."

For a short time his feelings seemed to overcome his iron nature, and he bent his head forward to hide a tear. When, how-

ever, he looked up, the expression was totally changed. His eyes flashed fire, as he reached out his yager, and shook it until the iron rod rattled. "There is one thing left, general—there is one thing left—and that's revenge! Let no Pawnee who values his life place himself within range of this yager. If he does——" He did not finish the sentence, but shook the gun with a fierce motion which expressed more than words.

"Norton! Norton!" exclaimed the agent, looking at him with surprise, "I never saw you so much under the influence of passion."

"You never saw me, general, when I had a friend murdered under my very eye," replied the other. "'Tis my duty to avenge his death—and I'll do it;" and again he shook his yager with the same threatening gesture.

While this conversation was going on, they came to the edge of the wood, which skirted a wide expanse of prairie. There the Indian

halted until the others came up. He then spoke in the Konza tongue.

“The path is clear,” said he, pointing to a faint snakelike line which wove its way across the prairie, plainly visible by its whitish appearance, when contrasted with the rest of the burnt ground. “This will lead the white man to the lodges of his brothers. The mark is broad upon the prairie : it needs not a keen eye to find it.”

“And, where do you go?” demanded the agent.

The Indian reached out his arm in an easterly direction. “The Pawnee has left his trail. The Konza must follow it.”

Without waiting a reply, he folded his blanket round his body, carefully covering the lock of his rifle to keep it from the damps of the evening. He then strode out on the prairie.

So sudden had been his departure, that it was not until he had kept on in the same

steady gait for several hundred yards, and become hidden by the brow of an intervening hill, that they were fully satisfied he did not intend to return. The others then turned their horses' heads towards the path he had indicated as their route.

Norton took the lead, as the person best acquainted with the country. They had not travelled far before night set in, leaving the trail but dimly visible amid the gathering gloom. Still the hunter rode rapidly forward, catching the road with an almost intuitive eye. At times, when even he had lost it, the beast he rode kept on as steadily as ever. The broad trail, which in a short time again appeared, showed the superiority of discernment in the brutes over that of their riders.

In the mean while, a keen north-west wind began to blow. During the afternoon it had sighed through the air, but it now swept along with a low moaning howl. Large clouds of ashes were whirled about, almost blinding the

travellers ; but the horses pushed stoutly onward, unmindful of the annoyance.

After bearing with it for some time, and after rubbing his eyes until they were nearly sore, Herrick broke out in an ejaculated curse upon the prairie.

“ Hush ! Herrick ! ” said Norton ; “ ’tis scarcely just to curse the prairie for the fault of the ashes. If you insist upon cursing something, give it to the Pawnees. It is probably they that set the grass on fire ; and if they did not, a little swearing at them will not be much out of the way, as they ’ll be sure to deserve it some time or other.”

However sound this reasoning might have been, it was totally lost upon Herrick. “ By Heaven ! Norton,” exclaimed he, “ this is enough to drive a man out of his senses. I would rather fight the whole Pawnee troop than ride another hour thus.”

“ It ’s natural that you should say so when there are no Pawnees to fight,” replied the

unmoved hunter. "I used occasionally to find fault with these ashes myself, before my eyes became hardened; but they don't trouble them now. However, as you are not accustomed to it, take the handkerchief from your neck, and make a veil of it, as you have seen the ladies do in the settlements. I'll warrant it their skins were never in so much danger of tanning from the sun as yours now is from the black ashes of the prairie. It sticks like tar, and a week's washing will scarcely clear your face, unless you can fall in with a piece of soap—rather a rare article in the back settlements. The folks are too much given to using sand to care for that—and your face, I think, is yet too tender to stand a rasping."

In pursuance of his advice, Herrick tore his handkerchief from his neck, and secured it round his face in such a manner as effectually to exclude the fine particles of dust: at the same time he was able, through

the thin fabric, to discern the road before him.

This arrangement completed, the journey was continued in a silence only broken by the howling of the wind and the sullen tramp of the horses.

It was near midnight when they reached a ridge from which a dim outline of trees was discerned, running in a narrow strip across the prairie, indicating the course of some small brook, which in that part of the country is generally dignified with the appellation of river.

“Yonder is the Shanger river,” said Norton, pointing to the range of trees. “That too empties into the Konza, which must now be near twenty miles off. We have been travelling to the north-east about six hours, and have come at least thirty miles, and long ones too. There is plenty of land to spare in this part of the country, and the hunters hereabouts generally give good measure to

every mile. The Indians, too, sometimes complain of this in the government treaties. They say that if they sell only fifty miles, it stretches till it covers a hundred. They never could account for it; and to tell the truth, I have often been puzzled at it myself. I always looked upon them as an abused people, except the Pawnees, who are villains to the backbone. — What's the matter with your horse, Herrick?" said he to the other, who had got a little in advance. "What is he starting at?"

"Something in the edge of the timber; but I cannot see it."

"Let me pass you," said Norton, spurring up. As he spoke, he pushed forward; but when his horse came abreast of that of Herrick, he planted his feet firmly, and resisted all efforts to urge him on. The pony of the agent was equally dogged in his resolution not to advance.

"'Tis strange!" said Norton; "but a horse's

instinct teaches him when there is danger. It cannot be that there are Indians hereabouts, for the beasts are used to the sight of them, and would not hesitate. Herrick ! take my bridle : I'll see what it means. Keep a tight hold of the rein ; should the horse jerk it away, he'll reach the Konza agency in half the time it has taken him to come from it."

" Stop ! I'll accompany you," said Herrick, preparing to dismount. " I may assist in case of danger."

" No ! no ! stay where you are. There is no danger. I am not afraid of that." As he spoke, he moved off, and in a few moments was hid by the darkness.

But a short time had elapsed when he was seen directly in front of them.

" It's a pack of wolves. They have pulled down a buck in the path. About a dozen are tugging at him. They are so bold that they would scarcely get out of my way. Our horses will never stir as long as they are there, and

it is impossible to force them through the thick underwood."

"We can dismount, and fire upon the wolves," said Herrick: "a few bullets will send them adrift."

"That will not do," replied the hunter. "I care not to send the report of a rifle through these woods. There may be enemies. It would not be safe."

"A firebrand or two hurled among them would rout the whole pack," said the agent.

"I was thinking of that. Remain quiet, and I will soon disturb their meal."—In a moment he stepped into the bushes, and selecting dead and dry branches, formed a fagot of nearly the thickness of his body, and about five feet long. He then returned to the path, and by means of a flint, steel, gunpowder, and a few dried leaves, communicated a light blaze to the end. Seizing it, he moved swiftly towards the animals. By the time he had reached the bushes a large blaze was

bursting forth, showing the gaunt forms of the wolves. They had now ceased their repast, and were gazing with terror at the hunter. When he came within a dozen paces, he sprang forward, brandishing the burning mass. A loud howl announced the success of his stratagem, and the splashing of water indicated the direction taken by several in their hasty flight. The hunter left the brand still burning, and dragging the dead buck into the bushes, returned to the horses. "Now hurry forward while the gang is scattered. It will not be ten minutes before they will be again tugging at the dead brute. The blazing brand alone now keeps them off. They will be back before it is done smoking."

While speaking, he mounted his horse, and led the way to the bank of the river.

"Push boldly through," said he. "The bottom is smooth, though the water is deep. Let your horse take his own path, Herrick; he has crossed this ford before, and can

guide you better than you *can* him," said he, seeing the animal, with the characteristic obstinacy of an Indian horse, resisting the direction which Herrick was giving him. "Let loose the rein—let loose the rein, or you will have him in the deep water."

At this second call, Herrick slackened the rein, and the horse in a few moments ascended the narrow pathway on the opposite shore.

"That's a bad stream when the waters are up," said the agent. "We lost two men at this ford during the last spring flood, though now it is a mere rivulet."

They were once more in a dark forest, and proceeded, trusting to the instinctive knowledge of the animals.

They had not gone far, before they heard the cries of the wolves, which had, as the hunter prophesied, returned to their banquet.

"Now, whip up!" said Norton; "a hundred yards more will bring us to the prairie, where we shall have more light to guide us."

As he spoke, he struck his heels against the sides of his horse. The beast, with a sudden strain, scrambled up a steep bank which bordered the thicket. The rest of the party followed, and a wide expanse of prairie lay in dim perspective before them.

“The way is now clear,” said Norton; “but a few small brooks lie between us and the cantonment, and three hours of good riding should show us the tall trees of Wolf Hill.” He once more drove his heels against the flanks of his horse, and pressed forward at a swift rate. The others followed, and in a few moments the forms of the three were hid behind an intervening hill. The heavy tread of their horses died away, and solitude and silence again spread their mantle over the black waste of prairie.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rosalind. O, coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love ! But it cannot be sounded ; my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.

As You like It.

UPON a high bluff, commanding a fine view of the Missouri, stood Wolf Hill cantonment, one of those pioneer garrisons scattered along the whole Indian frontier. About a dozen houses of various styles of architecture composed the barracks, which were surrounded by no walls. Upon the highest peak of the hill stood a block-house, strongly built of rough timber. In front of the cantonment a fence enclosed an open square of green-sward, here and there shaded by tall trees,

the remnant of the forest. Behind it rose a dense wood of dark timber.

The appearance of the whole place was that of a border settlement; and but for sentinels at their posts, and here and there a soldier in his undress, lounging lazily in the sunshine, there was nothing of a military nature. A group of young men, in the undress of lieutenants, were standing in front of one of the houses, engaged in conversation; and a single individual was rapidly walking towards them from the far end of the green.

“From the rate at which Santon walks,” said one of the young men, eyeing the newcomer, “he must have something to tell. A man rarely has any thing to hurry him at Wolf Hill. ’Pon my honour, I ’m waxing corpulent for want of exercise. It’s a great strain upon my skin to hold my body. I would that a war would break out among these Indians, to pull me down. ’Pon my honour, they are growing disagreeably peaceable. They kill

nobody now except each other. Well, Santon, what news?"

"Nothing for you, Fitzgerald; but I have a secret for Arden," replied the other, laughing. "Come, Arden, follow me: the rest will all know it presently."

A gloomy but fine-looking young officer, separated from the rest, took Santon by the arm. They walked some distance and stopped under a tree. "Well, Santon," said he, "what's this communication? It has, as you see, set the wits of the others a wool-gathering."

"It is something that interests you nearly my dear fellow."

"There can be little doubt of *that*, if I may judge from your important way of announcing it."

"None of your sarcasms," replied Santon good-humouredly. "I am not good at answering them; and if you let off any at me, I'll not tell you what I know."

“ I am dumb—but this news ?”

“ Well, without further words, Mr. Wilford and his daughter Lucy are coming to Wolf Hill.”

“ Pshaw !—Is that all ?” replied Arden, reddening.

“ It is—and it’s a great deal. Neither do I believe that you are so very easy about it as you pretend. Your face tells a very different tale from your tongue. I thought, too, from what passed when she was here last spring, that you—”

“ I assure you,” interrupted the other, “ that you have been most sadly mistaken. I feel most perfectly indifferent to Miss Wilford, further than mere friendship.”

“ Oh ! yes, yes. I understand. I always said there was nothing in it. But these reports *will* get abroad. However, I’m glad they’re not true, for Fitzgerald’s sake. He’s deeply taken with her.”

“ Fitzgerald !” exclaimed Arden hastily ;
“ why, he’s a fool !”

“Hardly that. To be sure, he is not *excessively* brilliant,” replied the other, composedly, adjusting his collar.

“I tell you, Santon, he is a downright fool! You don’t know him as I do.”

“Perhaps not;—at all events, he’s a deuced elegant fellow. He looks splendid on parade.”

“Pshaw! She’ll never take *him*!”

“I am not so sure of that,” replied Santon, secretly enjoying the trouble of his companion. “I heard her say that he was one of the finest-looking men she ever saw. Then, too,” continued he, “he has a sounding name. Fitzgerald — Fitzgerald — Mrs. Edmund Fitzgerald! That’s enough to captivate the hearts of a dozen of the fair sex. It’s worth a score of such commonplace names as ours.”

“A woman *won* by a *name*!” muttered Arden contemptuously.

“It will not be the first time it has hap-

pened," returned Santon; "but, in truth, I scarcely think Miss Wilford is to be captivated in that way."

"I thank you for *that*," replied Arden warmly.

"Thank me for *that*?" said Santon, assuming an air of perplexity. "What do you mean? What are *you* thanking me for? I was praising Miss Wilford, not *you*."

"Nothing! nothing!" replied Arden; "but when is Mr. Wilford expected?"

"Mr. Wilford's daughter, you mean."

"Yes! yes!. both Mr. Wilford and his daughter."

"Stop," said Santon coolly; "you ranked them wrong. You meant to mention Miss Wilford first, then to lug in the father."

"Any way you please. Only answer my question. When are they expected?—How soon will they come?"

"Why," said Santon, assuming an air of deep thought, "they are expected hourly; but

as to how soon they will come, that's a puzzler. I cannot demonstrate that proposition."

"Nor will I inflict it upon you," said Arden. "Will you answer me one question?"

"I'll hear it first."

"It is this:—Do you believe there is any likelihood of Fitzgerald's ever succeeding with Miss Wilford?"

Santon stood silent for a moment; then laying aside his jesting manner, he answered gravely, "No, Arden, I do not. Neither do I believe that any officer of this garrison will."

An ashy paleness passed over Arden's face, and was succeeded by a deep flush, as he uttered the single syllable, "Why?"

"Because I think—nay, I'm sure, that she loves some one else. I tell you this, Frank," continued Santon, in the same serious manner, "that you may not suffer yourself to become too deeply interested in her without being

aware of your danger. Your attentions when she previously visited this place did not escape observation or comment. As for the others," said he, looking towards them with something like contempt, "and Fitzgerald with them, I believe their vanity will be the only sufferer by their being turned off."

"You have told me, Santon," said Arden in an agitated voice, "that she loved another. His name?"

"You have heard of one Herrick Ostrand, now travelling somewhere in the Pawnee country?"

"Ay! He comes from Virginia. Is he the man?"

"I have reason to believe so, though report says they are not actually *engaged*. He, however, has now been absent more than a year. A great change may have taken place in her feelings. Perhaps, too, she may have forgotten him."

"No, Santon, no. It is not so easy to do

that. But I will see her again. I will learn it from her own lips, and then——” He did not finish the sentence. “I thank you for what you have told me; but, remember, this conversation is in confidence.”

“Trust me, Frank,” replied the other, warmly wringing his hand.

Arden made no reply, but left him, and hurried towards his quarters.

Santon remained for some time in deep thought. Though a man of warm feelings and many sterling qualities, there was yet a great simplicity of character about him. According to his own account, he had never been in love, and the excitement of his friend respecting Miss Wilford involved him in profound perplexity.

“Well!” thought he, aloud, “this love is a strange business. It has made one man of sense act considerably like a fool. I suppose, however, my own time will come one day—though, at present, I don’t think I would blush

or stammer for any girl that ever breathed. Ah ! Arden has left in good time, for yonder comes old Wilford's carriage. Benson !" shouted he to one of the orderlies, " let Major Harville know that Mr. Wilford's carriage is in the road."

Having given this direction, he turned upon his heel and sought his own quarters.

In a few moments the gate was swung open by one of the orderlies ; the vehicle drove through, and whirled along the road until it stopped at the house of the commanding officer.

Major Harville was at the door to meet his guests. His air was military and striking. He was tall. His features were frank, but stern. His hair had once been raven black, but was now sprinkled with grey. He advanced to the carriage, grasping his old friend by the hand, and warmly welcomed him to Wolf Hill.

" How is it with you, my dear friend ?" said

Mr. Wilford as he stepped out. "We have lived to meet again, in spite of the Indian wars in which you have been engaged. Here is my daughter Lucy. You have not forgotten her !"

"No, no," replied the other, taking her hand; "Miss Wilford is not a person easily forgotten;—at least many of my young officers have found it so."

The major perhaps was right, for rarely was a fairer being seen. She was about seventeen. Her form was slight, but beautifully rounded. Her dark hair was parted simply on her forehead, and one or two curls escaped from beneath her hat, and rested against a neck as white as ivory. Her features were delicate, regular, and beautiful. There was an air of intelligence united with diffidence in the expression of her countenance, that rendered it even more attractive than its beauty; and there was a gracefulness in her manners rarely equalled.

“ You too, Miss Wilford,” said the major, retaining her gloved hand, “ are heartily welcome. I need not tell you how happy Mrs. Harville will be to see you.”

As he spoke, he ascended the steps of the piazza, and ushered them into his dwelling. It was a large house, built of stone—the only one of that description in the cantonment—and probably had been erected as a stronghold in case of attack from Indians.

The room into which the major led the way was fitted up with a degree of elegance not to be expected in so remote a region of the far west. There was also a propriety in the arrangement of every thing, that bespoke the habitual superintendence of some individual of fine taste; and the little articles around indicated that individual to be a female. A few books were strewn carelessly over a table, and a bouquet of freshly culled flowers was lying on the open pages of one of them.

Major Harville cast his eye around as he entered the room. "Poor Julia! she does her best to make things neat here; though I sometimes fear her hours must pass heavily with so little society. She, however, has a happy disposition—always cheerful. I hope she will continue to reconcile herself to the wild life we lead."

"Do you doubt it, while *you* are here?" said a soft voice at his elbow, "and while our kind friends from St. Louis come so far to visit us? Fye, Harville!" At the same time the speaker ran forward and imprinted a kiss upon the lips of her fair guest. Mr. Wilford was again welcomed, and after a few words of congratulation, Lucy withdrew in company with the wife of her host.

"Julia is always thus," said the major, looking towards the door through which the two had just disappeared. "She is *all* to me!"

He then commenced walking hastily up and

down the room, but at length, facing his visitor, stopped short in his course.

“ Mr. Wilford, your daughter is beautiful!”

“ I have heard that compliment so often,” replied the other, “ that I have no right to gainsay it.”

“ You take it very coolly; but let me tell you, there are many at Wolf Hill who will both speak and feel more warmly.”

“ So I suppose,” replied the old man, smiling. “ I perceive that I am now in company with one of that description.”

“ Pshaw !” returned the other, “ I speak not of myself; but I have young officers who don’t see a pretty face once in six months. Some of them have never had an opportunity of getting in love, but are quite ripe for it. The sight of your daughter will act on them like fire on gunpowder. You do not dream what damage you are doing the country in thus exposing her officers. A young man is good for little just after the first attack. I

speak from experience. Do you remember young Arden, whom I introduced to you during your last visit to this place?"

"Perfectly. I liked him much," replied Mr. Wilford quietly.

"And Miss Wilford?" continued the other, "what did she think of him? She saw much of him."

"She seemed to esteem him highly. She always spoke of him as a very estimable young man."

"Estimable!" exclaimed the other impatiently. "Why, Mr. Wilford, he is not a man to be esteemed!"

"Then why," replied the other, "did you introduce him to my daughter?"

"Listen to me, my old friend, and keep cool," said the major. "Frank Arden is a man to be *more* than esteemed: he must be loved!"

"Loved!" ejaculated the other.

"Ay! loved! and by your daughter—by

Miss Wilford. He is strongly attached to her — can think of nothing else. He has been a different man since he saw her last spring. He has had, however, the good sense to make no confidants ; and I should never have known it, had not my wife detected it. Women are quicksighted in these matters.”

“ I am very sorry to hear this,” replied Mr. Wilford after a pause of some duration ;
“ very sorry !”

“ Why so ?—you could scarcely hit upon a better match for her.”

“ I doubt it not,—I doubt it not ; but still he can never marry her.”

“ That’s strange !” returned the other : “ you certainly would not do violence to the girl’s inclinations ?”

“ By no means ! and for that reason, she cannot marry Mr. Arden.”

“ I understand you,” said the major : “ Miss Wilford’s affections are engaged to another ?”

“ They are.”

“ And you, I presume, approve of her choice ? ”

“ I do.”

“ Then a fine young fellow will be disappointed, and I am sorry for it—that’s all ! ”

All further conversation upon this topic was dropped, and in a short time they separated — one to attend to his official concerns, the other to relieve himself from the disagreeable effects of travelling.

CHAPTER IX.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought.

WORDSWORTH.

EARLY in the day succeeding the arrival of the two visitors at Wolf Hill, the roll of the drum, accompanied by the shrill tones of a fife, were sounding over the green, announcing the morning muster, and several laggards were hastening to the place of parade. Major Harville was standing near the troop, while the officer of the day was examining the arms and equipments.

“What do you want, Williams?” demanded the major, turning to an orderly, who stood

with his hand at his cap, watching an opportunity to address him.

“General Ashton and two strangers are at the quarters, asking for the commanding officer,” replied the other respectfully.

“I will attend them.”

Two minutes of rapid walking brought him to where the three were waiting. The agent was still mounted; but the others were standing beside their horses, and leaning on their rifles.

Both Norton and the agent were personally known to the major, and his welcome was given in those cordial and frank tones that speak sincerity.

“I have heard of you, sir,” said he as the agent presented Herrick; “and Mr. Ostrand will always find an open door and a warm reception, as long as Henry Harville commands at Wolf Hill.”

“I thank you, but feel no surprise at your kindness,” replied Herrick; “the open hand of

Major Harville is well known up at the Trading Company on the Missouri."

"It is a pleasant thing to listen to one's own praises," said the other, laughing. "But a truce to your compliments, and attend to your wants. By your jaded looks, you have found but little comfort on the prairies,—even *your* iron muscles seem fagged," said he, addressing Norton. "Is *that* blood upon your clothes?"

"Yes!" replied the other; "Pawnee blood!"

"Ha! is there trouble in that quarter?"

"They have killed Lafleche, a hunter of the Trading Establishment."

The brow of the officer darkened, and his stern eye grew even sterner: "By Heaven!" said he, "these Redskins will never cease robbing and murdering until every man of them is exterminated. Treaty after treaty has been made, and broken with impunity. Instead of presents, they should see naked bayonets. And the poor fellow who was

murdered, I suppose he, too, will be unavenged."

"Stop! major," said Norton fiercely; "he *has been* avenged: not one of the murdering party will again see the waters of the Platte; we slew every mother's son."

"You did right,—you did right. And was it thus that you received these stains?" said he, pointing to the red marks upon his vestments.

"No! I got them two days ago in a bout upon the Nemahaw. There is a troop of several hundred Pawnees hanging about the bottoms of that river."

"This is bad news," said the major; "worse than you are aware of. But yesterday a party from the State left this post to hunt upon the banks of that very river. Should the Pawnees find them, they will make short work of them."

"That's too true; and the chances are that they *will*," said Norton. "From their number,

I imagine they are upon a war expedition, and will keep about that part of the country for a long time, unless they succeed in taking some scalps."

"Then there is but one resource," said Harville: "we must send a party to overtake our friends, if possible, and warn them of their danger; or, if too late for warning, to assist them. Twenty-four hours should carry a well-mounted troop to the Nemahaw. The cantonment is so poorly garrisoned, that I can spare but twenty men. If they are men of mettle, that number can beat off two hundred Pawnees."

"Are they skilled in bush-fighting?" demanded Norton.

"They are rangers newly recruited, but doubtless good at firing from behind a tree."

"Humph!" ejaculated Norton with an air of dissatisfaction.

"There is one difficulty," continued Harville, not observing the disapproving face of

the hunter. "I have no guide acquainted with the country."

"I will be the guide," said Norton.

"Still there is another difficulty. I know not towards what part of the Nemahaw they will direct their course, nor where they will encamp. They may stop near the Missouri, or they may advance fifty miles up the stream."

"That's of little weight. The prairies were burnt when they started, and the track of a shod horse will lie for months upon the burnt sod. It differs from a mocassin in that; the last crushes the stubble, the horse-shoe makes a hole in the earth. There is danger, however, that we may fall upon a wrong trail."

"That cannot be," replied the major. "No others have gone, except two or three straggling bands of Jaways or Konzas, though they too had horses with them."

"An Indian horse is never shod," said Nor-

ton; "it is easy to know their trail. The toe and heel pieces of an iron shoe always leave a deep print upon the sod; while the track of an Indian horse is smooth and round, and deepest where the hoof first strikes the ground: the heel hardly leaves a mark. Their trail will give but little trouble."

"I am glad of it, and thank you for your offer of service, which I accept."

Herrick then offered to accompany the party, and was gladly accepted, notwithstanding a warm expostulation from Norton.

"The sooner the party set out, the better," said Harville when the arrangement was concluded. "Will you walk into my office? You see Ashton has grown tired of our conversation, and has sought company that he likes better," said he, pointing to the agent, who had strolled across the green, and was standing with his hands thrust into his breeches pockets, surrounded by several young officers. He, however, left the group, and rejoined the party as they entered the office.

It was a large empty-looking room. Half a dozen wooden chairs, with an oaken table, and a small writing-desk, covered with papers and letters, succeeded but partially in removing that air of desolation which always hangs around an unfurnished chamber.

Immediately on entering, Major Harville turned to Norton.

“How long do you ask to get ready?”

“As to myself,” replied the other, “a little washing and a hearty meal will fit me out. I ask an hour.”

“An hour! you are expeditious. I am sure that the rangers will not be so soon ready. Their horses are scattered through the bottoms, and it will take time to catch them. Every thing, however, shall be hurried.”

“Excuse me, Major Harville,” said Herick, interrupting him: “who is that on the opposite side of the green? He resembles a person of my acquaintance from St. Louis—a Mr. Wilford.”

“ It is the same. He is at present a guest of mine.”

“ Is he here alone ?” demanded Herrick with marked embarrassment. “ I thought perhaps somebody might have accompanied him.”

“ Somebody !” said the major, eyeing him keenly. “ Yes, somebody did accompany him, if by somebody you mean his daughter.”

“ I did indeed,” replied Herrick, laughing, “ and am happy to know it.”

“ I presume you are acquainted with Miss Wilford ?”

“ I have that honour,” replied Herrick dryly ; for that was a subject on which he liked not to be questioned.

“ She is a charming young lady. Did you often visit her ?”

“ Occasionally,” was the laconic answer.

“ Humph ! this is Frank Arden’s rival. The sooner he meets the Pawnees, the better.” This was muttered mentally, and reached

the ears of none. "I will return presently," said he; and opening the door, he walked across the green, and entered a building opposite.

As soon as he departed, the agent, who had been leaning back in his chair without paying much attention to what was going on, broke silence.

"I think, Mr. Ostrand," said he, "you mentioned Mr. Wilford and his daughter. Are they here?"

"They are."

"Ah! that will be glad news to Frank Arden. He was mightily taken with the young lady during her last visit here. He was constantly at her elbow when she walked; and when she rode, he was always at her bridle. After her departure he became moody enough. I have seen but little of him since. 'Tis strange how infatuated some people become when they once catch sight of a handsome face. Now *I* never recollect being troubled in that way."

Herrick was too much engrossed with what he had learned from the first part of the speech to pay any attention to the last. This, however, was of no consequence, for without pausing the agent went on. "Nearly sixty years have passed, and I can safely say that no attachment of mine to any female that ever breathed has given me an hour's trouble, or made me sleep the less soundly. How many of them *I* may have *worried*, I never knew. 'Tis said that several in the settlements would not have said 'No' to me thirty years ago. I was not altogether a bad-looking fellow in my younger days," said he, stroking his hand over his leathery face; "but I preferred a single life of freedom, to being shackled by a wife and a brood of children. I kept clear of them all: I cared for none—none—not one." He brought out the last words with a pause between each, and a heavy yawn brought up the rear, which seemed to justify the assertion.

For some time the silence was unbroken, save by the footsteps of Herrick, who paced hurriedly backward and forward. At length he stopped in front of Norton.

“In how short a time are we to set out?”

“This afternoon, or to-morrow morning.”

“I will be ready,” said he, going to the door. “Now I must prepare for it.”

“Stop! I will accompany you,” said Norton. “Perhaps, too, the general will go with us.”

“I care not if I do,” said the agent; “though, in truth, I am much jaded from the ride of last night, and don’t feel like bustling about to-day.” With these words, and another yawn, he sauntered out of the door.

The moment that he was gone, Herrick walked up to Norton. “Leave me now, for Heaven’s sake!” said he in a low tone. “I must see Miss Wilford to-day, now, before we start. You know my reasons. Contrive to keep the agent busy.”

“ Had I not been blind, I might have known it,” said the hunter : “ but I was so vexed with your persisting to accompany the party, that I did not think of it. Go ; I will detain him.”

The moment these few words had passed, Norton addressed the unsuspecting agent, and engrossed his attention, until Herrick disappeared behind one of the buildings. He then re-entered the office. “ I thought you were going to walk ?” said Ashton with some surprise. “ You have yet to get ready for your departure.”

“ A man,” replied Norton, “ who has been a hunter on the prairies all his life, needs but little preparation to journey on them for a few days. Upon second thoughts, I will wait until the major returns : he may wish to see me before giving his orders.”

“ But,” said the other, looking round, “ where is Herrick ? He came out with us. I did not observe that he had left us. Did you see which way he went ? I will join him ; for

now that I am up, I think a little stretching will not hurt my limbs. Can you tell me where he is?"

"'Tis a hard task to keep track of his movements, general. He is at one moment in one place, and the next in another. You would do well to remain here until he returns."

"So be it," replied the other with great philosophy. Thrusting his hands in his coat pockets, he leaned his chair against the wall, and was soon enjoying a sound slumber.

CHAPTER X.

Love, hope, and self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

By one of the windows of her fairy apartment sat Lucy Wilford. She was silent, but not sad. Her cheek rested on her hand, a few clustering curls were twined round her white fingers, and a long ringlet, which had escaped from a band round her head, rested on her neck, forming a rich contrast with its snowy whiteness. Her lips, slightly parted, displayed a row of pearly teeth ; and a smile, the harbinger of happy thoughts, was slumbering around them.

Her eyes were fixed upon a gorgeous mass of summer clouds, then floating in the western sky, glowing beneath the sunbeams, and enriching the landscape with a thousand bright rays of prismatic beauty.

“How beautiful is this world!” thought she : “how happily one may live in it!” was the sequel to the idea. A soft sigh followed.

She turned her eyes from these insignia of Nature’s glory, and fixed them on the waters of the Missouri. On—on they swept, flashing and writhing in the sunbeams, but still speeding towards their destination. Swift was the rush of the water — but swifter still is the flight of mind.

Lucy looked listlessly upon the turbulent tributary of the Mississippi. Almost unconsciously her thoughts followed the course of its dark flood, until they had traversed the whole length of its windings, and roved mid scenes of her home at St. Louis.

In fancy she was not alone ; for there was

one who had long since become dear to her : and when this is the case, it is rarely that the thoughts suffer their owner to be companionless.

The object of her meditation is already known to the reader in the person of Herrick Ostrand. Nearly two years previous he had become acquainted with her. From a slight acquaintance he had become an intimate friend. They had walked together — together they had made excursions on horseback ; and together they had pondered over the pages of some classic author, or saddened over some sorrowful relic of legendary lore. Thus week after week and month after month had passed, until they loved without knowing it, for of love they never spoke. The first thing that awakened them to a true state of their feelings was a letter to Herrick from an uncle in Virginia, expostulating with him for lingering at St. Louis, instead of pursuing that route along the Upper Missouri which had been the object of his leaving home.

To advance the true reason to his uncle would, he knew, be useless. He therefore gloomily prepared to resume a journey which but a few months before had been his happiest anticipation. He bade farewell to Lucy with a heavy heart, said nothing of his hopes or fears, but left her to her own conjectures as to both, and in a week was many miles from the abode of her he loved.

Such was the state of things at present. Herrick had been absent for nearly a year, and no tidings of him, unless now and then a straggling report that he was yet alive. But though this length of time had elapsed, still he was remembered by Lucy as vividly as ever: still did she picture him as formerly, brave, noble, and generous; and still did she clothe him with all that ideal perfection which a woman's heart is apt to throw round him who has first gained it.

There is a romance and poetry about the love of woman, secluded from worldly pur-

suits, and far removed from the meaner feeling that pervades the heart of man. With her there are flowers without thorns ; skies without clouds ; sunshine without storms. She almost lives in the scenes of her own fairy mind. But, however wild, however beautiful, she is never alone. *He* is always with her in idea, and is the sorcerer that calls forth these bright hallucinations of her fancy.

“ ’Tis strange,” said Lucy, as she still sat with her hand supporting her cheek,—“ ’tis strange that he should never have written to let us know that he was well, or whither he was going ! I wonder if he still thinks of me !” was the concluding part of the half-thought, half-uttered soliloquy.

As is usual in such cases, although surprised at this omission, she contrived to find a hundred excuses for him ; probably many more than the delinquent could himself have conjured up ; and so deeply was she engaged in her reverie, that she noticed not the opening

of the door, nor did she hear the tread of a man's foot as he walked across the room and placed himself directly opposite her.

For a moment he stood watching her without speaking. The red blood mantled his cheek, at one moment dyeing it to the deepest crimson, and then retreating until it left his features pale as marble. His quivering lip betokened agitation. He stood directly in front of her, apparently with the hope that she would observe him. He, however, was unnoticed. Her eye was fixed upon the shining river, and the same gentle smile was playing around her mouth. At length he spoke.

“If I may judge from Miss Wilford's countenance, her thoughts are happy ones.”

A start! a slight—a very slight blush, announced that she was taken by surprise. The next instant she rose up with perfect self-possession.

“Mr. Arden, I am happy to see you. My father also will be glad to meet a person who

stands so high in his esteem. It is now nearly half a year since we met ; but I can assure you that you have not been forgotten. Will you be seated ?” said she, pointing to a chair.

Arden stood for a moment in hesitation, then declined it. “ I have but a few moments to spare,” said he in a hurried voice. “ In fifteen minutes I leave this post in command of a troop of horse for the Nemahaw.”

“ I have heard of the expedition, and hope that you may find no foes. An Indian is a horrid enemy.”

“ I fear,” replied Arden, “ that if there be truth in the report of two persons who accompany us, we shall find sufficient numbers to afford ample employment for our little troop.”

Lucy’s colour heightened, and her pulse beat quicker, as she asked, “ What persons brought this intelligence ?” Then, as if conscious that her earnestness might attract the attention of Arden, she added hastily, “ I can-

not help feeling a deep interest in an event likely to terminate so unfortunately to my friends."

Arden bit his lip as he listened to the turn she gave her words. "Their names are Norton, and—and—" purposely hesitating, and watching her countenance.

Lucy listened with breathless interest.

"—And—one Osborne—or Ostrand—Her-
rick Ostrand. Now I think of it, I have heard that he spent some time in St. Louis: perhaps he had the honour of being known to you?"

Lucy felt the blood rush over her face. To hide her embarrassment she leaned out of the window, then resuming her seat, answered with an air of assumed indifference—

"I *do* know Mr. Ostrand. We met frequently at St. Louis. He was a favourite of my father, and visited the house often." Here she paused.

"May I ask," said Arden, "whether he was not also a friend of Miss Wilford? For

your mentioning him as the friend of your *father*, would imply that he was not a favourite of yours."

"If any such idea was conveyed, I would remove it. I respect and esteem Mr. Ostrand, and rank him among the number of my friends."

Arden did not answer, for at the moment he was engaged with his own thoughts. He had come for the purpose of finding out whether any attachment existed between her and Herrick. A glance of his eye through the window informed him that the Rangers were mounting, and that what he had to say must be said soon or not at all. The apparent frank tone of her last words encouraged him. "For," thought he, "had she cared for him, she would have hesitated to avow openly even friendship."

Thus strengthening his resolution, he determined to speak out.

"You said, Miss Wilford, that Mr. Ostrand

frequently visited your father while in St. Louis. Think you nothing but friendship for the father brought him there? Do you not imagine that the daughter had something to do with his visits also?"

"I do believe Mr. Ostrand to be a friend to myself as well as to my father."

"And nothing nearer?"

Lucy Wilford rose proudly and haughtily. "Mr. Arden, these questions are disagreeable. I can pretend no longer to misunderstand you. If I offend you, I am sorry for it; but this conversation must cease. I wish this subject dropped."

How easy it is for woman, when pressed too hard, to turn upon those she dreads, and by her innate dignity of character repel the very assaults which make her tremble! She is like a timid deer, which flies from thicket to thicket, and when flight is no longer possible, turns to bay. Then let the hunters be wary.

Arden could say no more. There was a

dignity in her last words which awed him, and put an end to all further prying into her thoughts. For a few moments he was silent; then, with a flushed brow and a husky voice, he spoke.

“Pardon me, Miss Wilford, I was not actuated by any want of respect in thus questioning you. I wished not to learn your secret feelings from meddling curiosity alone. I had other motives; I—I—” Here he grew confused, and the colour on his cheek grew deeper. Lucy bent forward and looked upon the floor; her face was of as deep a crimson as his own. He caught sight of her features and went on. “There is no person of whose good opinion I am more desirous, none for whom I have a greater respect. It is not merely cold respect—it is a warmer feeling.”

He seized her hand and pressed it between both of his. “Miss Wilford, may I dare to speak my feelings? May I tell you that I love you above all others,—that I fondly, fervently love you? and may I hope—”

At the moment that he seized her hand, Lucy had risen and endeavoured to extricate it; but he pressed it still closer between his own. Greatly embarrassed, she happened to turn her eyes towards the door. Directly in front of her stood Herrick, his eyes flashing fire, but his face as pale as ashes. His moccasined tread had not been heard as he entered, and he had been in the room long enough to hear the last words of Arden, to see the impassioned attitude in which he was bending over the imprisoned hand, and to observe what he thought an acquiescence in its captivity. For a moment both he and Lucy stood with their eyes riveted upon each other; then turning on his heel, he left the room and hurried from the building.

Arden had not observed either his presence or departure, and greatly was he startled when Lucy abruptly snatched her hand from him, and said in a quick stifled voice, "Leave me, Mr. Arden, instantly!"

He looked at her : her face was deadly pale, and her eyes were filled with tears.

“ I hope I have not offended you, Miss Wilford. If I have—”

“ Leave me ! leave me, Mr. Arden ; only leave me.”

“ May I hope, Miss Wilford ?”

“ Mr. Arden,” said she haughtily, “ I wish to be alone : *before* I requested it, *now* I insist.”

“ Miss Wilford,” said Arden, “ hear but one word.”

“ Mr. Arden,” said she in a tremulous voice, “ do not speak to me of *that* again. I never can love you ; I never can be yours ; and now, I beseech you, leave me to myself.” As she spoke, she buried her face in her hands, and the tears gushed from between her fingers.

For a moment, Arden was irresolute. Being convinced, however, that all he could say would only tend to increase her trouble, he turned off, and in no happy mood left the room.

After his departure, Lucy remained in the same posture, until the sound of clattering hoofs called her to herself. Then suddenly remembering that Arden had mentioned Herrick's intention of accompanying the expedition, she started up, and ran to the window, with the hope of once more seeing him before he left the place.

She perceived the train of horsemen filing out at the gateway at the far end of the green. She perceived Arden riding from his quarters towards them ; and she distinguished the weather-beaten form of Norton, for she had also seen him in St. Louis. Herrick was not there. At that moment the sound of hoofs struck upon her ear, and a single horseman galloped down the avenue and passed her dwelling. Her heart beat quick, for she recognised his form. As he came on, a smile lighted up her features, and leaning from the window, she half raised her hand to wave him a farewell. He however turned his head ab-

ruptly, and took no notice of her gesture ; then plunged his spurs into the flanks of his horse, and rode at a more rapid rate until he overtook the party.

Lucy watched him until he joined them, then with a feeling of wounded pride withdrew into her chamber.

“ He shall repent this,” thought she, while a tear trembled in her eye ; “ he shall find that I am not to be slighted with impunity ! ” and her little foot patted the floor impatiently.

“ I know he loves me ; but that shall not prevent my retaliation. I will return neglect for neglect. I will slight him. I will let him see that I can wound as well as he. To turn from me thus, and when starting upon such an expedition ! ”

Just then the idea of the deadly nature of the expedition flashed across her mind. He might be killed—he might never return. “ Oh ! Herrick, Herrick ! I was wrong to blame

you," murmured she. She ran to the window. The troop were riding over the top of a distant hill. She watched it until the last horseman disappeared; then throwing herself upon a sofa, she buried her face in both her hands.

CHAPTER XI.

Poet. Let me go in to see the general.

There is some grudge between them ; 'tis not meet
They be alone.

Julius Caesar.

“A RACY morning, this” said Arden, addressing a weather-beaten man beside him, upon the top of a small knoll which swelled up in the midst of a black prairie; “it makes the blood flow through the veins briskly. This sharp air braces the nerves. Methinks a hunter should rarely be troubled with sickness.”

“He is not,” replied Norton, leaning on the end of his gun, and slowly running his eye along the expanse of prairie, where it met the horizon. “A hunter’s complaints are few:

a broken limb, a hug from a bear, or perhaps a gore from the horn of a deer—that last is hard to cure. As for those ailments brought on by high living and want of exercise, they are seldom found here. I never yet saw a fat hunter; they walk off every thing but the bones and muscles: yet, after all, they are not often longlived. Accidents are the same to them that sickness is to the man of the settlements. A hunter may be killed by the game he is chasing; he may be drowned in swimming a river; he may be starved some day, when his powder and ball are used up. Then, too, he has always a host of enemies, and in some parts of the country can scarcely call his scalp his own.”

“ I presume,” said Arden, curious to hear something of the private history of the speaker, “ that you too have had hairbreadth escapes.”

“ I have lived twenty years upon the prairie,” replied Norton, “ and my life, like

that of every hunter, has had its mixture of good and bad."

" 'Tis a bleak abode for so long a time," said Arden, casting his eye over the black waste. " It is very desolate."

" 'Tis not always so," replied Norton: " look at it in the summer, when it is covered with herbage of all kinds. Where will you find a garden to compare with it? I have walked over acres where I could not step without crushing a flower. You too have seen them in summer; and when you look at them as they now are, should remember what they will be when the spring comes. For my part, I like them best when they have been burnt. The hunting is better. The only places that escape the fire are the bottoms, and there the deer go in search of food. You are not obliged to cross so much ground to find your game."

" At all events," said Arden, " though a pleasant abode in fair weather, you will at least acknowledge that a more comfortable

place might be found in a storm. Even now, some of those Rangers who are but a single night from their barracks are complaining of cramps and stiff limbs. Heaven help them if a rain should come on !”

The hunter smiled half contemptuously as he replied, “ They are fresh from their beds in the States, and it will take time to harden them. They are not the men for an errand of this kind. They may be brave, but courage will be of little service to those unskilled in Indian warfare. They know not how to take advantage of every bush, or stone, or tree ; and then it requires a quick eye to send a bullet into a Redskin as he flashes past you. These are not gifts of Nature ; nor are they learned in a day. Eight or ten well-trained hunters would be of more service than all that troop.”

“ You misjudge them,” said Arden ; “ you will find them true as steel. Besides, these Pawnees are rude, unskilled.”

“Unskilled in fire-arms, 'tis true, but not in the use of bows and arrows. They are rude, too; but they are also fierce, and, above all, cruel and brave. My best hope is not to meet them. If we do, there are many among yon band who will not return to tell the tale. It was a waste of life to send them; but Major Harville, like most of the officers, underrates the Indians.—Here comes Mr. Ostrand. He has seen something of them. Ask his opinion: I think it will not differ much from mine.”

As he spoke, he pointed to Herrick, who was slowly advancing from the encampment. His step was careless, and he sauntered along, apparently in deep thought, and unaware of the course he was taking; nor did he notice his proximity to the two until Norton spoke.

“A man who travels through the world,” said the hunter, “and looks only at his feet, will know but little of what is going around him.”

“Ha! Norton, you are stirring early. I

thought I had left you at the fire still wrapped in your blanket."

"Poh! I'm not luxurious in my sleeping; you know that. I was up before the grey of day. Mr. Arden and I were talking about these Rangers. What do you think of them?"

Herrick had not noticed Arden till then; but when their eyes met, the blood rushed over his face. He recollected the scene he had witnessed between him and Lucy at Wolf Hill. During the whole of the previous afternoon, the two young rivals had kept from any intercourse, and now met for the first time. The emotion, momentary as it was, did not escape the observant eye of Norton; for he had been long accustomed to study the signs of the human countenance as well as those of the prairies and the heavens. The few words that had escaped from the Konza agent, while at the cantonment, also gave him a clue to the agitation of his young companion.

To divert his thoughts, he therefore repeated his remark. "What say you, Herrick, to the force that Major Harville has sent?—these raw Rangers, how will they stand a brush with the Indians?"

"Twenty Rangers, if unused to Indian warfare, can do but little as a body of troops," said Herrick, recovering his calmness. "Yet that number of stout-hearted men may make a desperate resistance should we come to a struggle. They are, however, less experienced than could be wished."

"You know them not, Mr. Ostrand," said Arden haughtily, at the same time, from a feeling of pique, giving his men more importance than he really considered them to possess. "Though they may not be well versed in all the tricking of Indian warfare, still they are *men*. You undervalue them."

"I hope I do; the result will show who is right," replied Herrick quietly.

Arden reddened, turned to Norton, and demanded if he were ready to start.

“Ay ! and have been so for an hour. When I rose, the sun was not up. It is now an hour high. 'Tis full time we were on the move, for it will be night before we see the waters of the Nemahaw ! Your men,” continued he, “may be as brave as you say ; but they waste time in getting ready. Had I been alone, there would now have been ten miles between me and this timber.”

Arden made no reply, but strode down to the encampment. For a quarter of an hour a sound of preparation, the clamour of voices, and the tramp of horses, sounded through the grove. Then a train of horsemen, headed by Arden, galloped out into the prairie. In the mean time, Norton and Herrick had mounted. The former, after looking out the trail of the hunting-party, started off at a sharp trot, followed by the band.

Thus the rout continued for hours: they soon lost sight of all trees—nothing was to be seen but blackness and desolation. The works of Nature had been laid in ruin by the hand of man; nor was it until sundown that they caught sight of a distant line of trees.

“Yonder is the Nemahaw,” said Norton. “It’s the largest branch in this part of the country, yet scarcely deserves the name of river when you compare it with the Missouri or the Konza.”

“It is well wooded,” said Arden, to whom this remark was addressed. “From the thick forest about it, I should suppose the stream was large.”

“Not very; it rises a hundred miles or so up the country. I have travelled along it from the mouth, where it is nearly two hundred yards wide,—so far up, that to step from one bank to the other becomes but a stride for a child. Its source is a hundred miles in a straight line; its windings double that length,

for it is as crooked as a snake. Here's a twist in the trail," said he abruptly, pointing to the trace, which during the whole day had coursed in a northerly direction, but now turned off to the west. "Whoever guided the party must have been an experienced hunter; for few know that the elk are more abundant toward the head waters."

"It was an old man, by the name of Adher-bal."

"I know him well," said Norton; "he knows every thicket between this and the Platte better than an Indian. He'll lead the party where they'll find game enough; but, from the direction he has taken, I fear he'll bring them upon the arrows of the Pawnees. If the others are like him, those Redskins will have hard fighting before they gain a scalp."

"There's a negro in the party by the name of Sip," said Arden, "who is staunch as iron."

“ Old Sip, I know him ; he sends a true bullet. We must keep on briskly,” continued he, accelerating the speed of his horse : “ night will be upon us long before we reach their camp.”

Notwithstanding the rapidity of their pace, darkness overtook them, while they were yet far from their destination. The grey line of the trail was, however, distinctly visible, even in the obscurity. The party had drawn more closely together ; Norton, however, still some distance in advance. While riding thus, Herriek joined him.

“ Norton,” said he in a low tone, “ we are watched. Twice I have seen a figure skulking along yon hill in front of us.”

“ Are you sure of it ?”

“ I am,—it may be only a wolf ; but I am certain that it has life.”

“ Every man of them Rangers, green !” muttered Norton, looking at the band. “ Not

one can I send out as a scout! I wish old Adherbal was here."

Whilst he was speaking, Herrick dismounted, drew a pair of pistols from his holsters, and thrust them in his belt, then shouldered his rifle. "Take my bridle," said he; "I will cross the ridge. As long as all is quiet, you may be sure all is well; but when you hear my rifle, be ready for danger."

He threw the rein to Norton, and before he could utter a word, either of advice or expostulation, was lost in the darkness.

In the mean time, the party slowly advanced to the foot of the hill. Here Norton halted.

Minute after minute passed; still Herrick did not return.

"It's cursed strange!" muttered Arden: "the enemy seems hard to find. He may not look very sharp."

"You don't know him," replied Norton, piqued at this implied doubt of his favourite.

“ I ’ve seen him when driven to desperation. You should have seen his eye then !—By the Lord ! there goes his rifle. Spur—spur—on ! on ! there ’s mischief in the wind.”

A second shot followed the first. “ There goes a pistol !—Don’t spare the spur.” The next moment they crossed the brow of the hill.

“ What ’s that !” said Norton, as something darted swiftly across the line of their path. “ Herrick !” shouted he.

“ Hilloah !” answered Herrick, from a different quarter.

“ Aha ! an Indian. Give him a bullet—give him a bullet !”

A dozen rifles flashed through the darkness, and lighted up the prairie sufficiently to give a glimpse of several savage figures darting across the brow of the hill : they, however, were invisible the next instant.

“ Don’t follow !” cried Norton ; “ you might

as well follow a Jack-o'-lantern, and would probably meet an arrow before you had gone a hundred yards."

"Look out!" shouted Herrick. "One is coming towards you: my pistol snapped."

The Indian, however, changed his course in the darkness, for he did not pass in sight of the party.

In a few minutes Herrick joined them.

"How many did you see?" demanded Norton.

"But two," was the answer.

"The devil! half a dozen at least scampered over the hill. Your fire must have started them."

"I met but two: one crouching in the prairie,—I mistook him for a clod of earth, till I got directly upon him,—the other I caught sight of as he passed me."

"But you fired?"

"And missed!"

“ So much the better, since you could not kill all. Come ! strike into a gallop ; the faster we travel, the less will be our danger.”

As he spoke, he struck spurs into his horse, and, followed by the rest, rode swiftly towards their place of destination.

CHAPTER XII.

Falstaff. Lord ! Lord ! how this world is given to lying !

Henry IV.

ABOUT an hour before sunset of the day on which the events just narrated took place, two men were seated in front of a fire of logs, blazing cheerily amid the thick forest of the Nemahaw. They were both negroes. The grizzled hair of one, of that mixed colour denominated pepper-and-salt, indicated that he had passed the prime of life, and that though his frame still retained its vigour, a few years would do much towards impairing its physical powers. His brow was knitted ; and his face,

here and there marked by a scar, showed that his life had been neither a peaceable nor easy one. A pair of trousers of tow cloth, a coarse shirt of the same material, open at the throat, displaying the powerful muscles of his neck, constituted the whole of his wearing apparel, excepting a pair of deer-skin mocassins, which encased two feet of large dimensions. Round his waist was buckled a broad leathern belt, sustaining a knife-scabbard; and near him was a rifle, the shot-pouch of which hung from a bush close at hand.

The other negro was a short goblin fellow, with a flat head, square shoulders, and a pair of curved supporters. He was enveloped in an old blue cloth coat, which from its appearance had been made for a person of double his dimensions, as the skirts reached to his heels. Huge goggle eyes, and a mouth of formidable size, completes the description of his person. In years he was much younger than his companion. The two were engaged

in preparing a piece of deer's flesh for roasting, at the same time keeping up a conversation which apparently related to some individual not then present.

"Tell you what, Uncle Sip," said the younger of the two, "when Mas John lie, he lie tough; mus go mortally agin your conscience to back um."

"Sho, Cuff," replied the other; "Mas John albays so, ebber since I knowed um, goin on twenty year: he albays lie. It come more natrall to um."

"Know dat," said Cuff; "but den, Uncle Sip, *you* say 'yes' to um, and some on um is awful. It 'stroy your carackter for voracity. Folks 'll sarve you as dey sarves him. Dey 'll whistle when you tell a story."

"Poh! Cuff, you talk—Uncle Sip nebber lie 'cept for Mas John, and nebber when his stories not want it."

"Know dat," said Cuff; "but dey want it albays: would 'gree wid um myself sometimes,

ef his stories wasn't so awful. I'm 'feard o' losin my carackter."

" Puh ! who you tellin 'bout carackter ? how you ebber git carackter ?"

" Heard ole Herbal," said Cuff, " say somfin 'bout moral carackter."

" 'Drot your skin, Cuff ! I tink you too wide awake to be tuck in by ole Herbal. Know he nebber 'grees to nofin 'cept what he say hisself. Did ole Herbal ebber tell you what moral carackter was ?"

" No, nebber."

" Well, Cuff, nebber talk no sich nonsense to me. I'se too old a weasel to be cotch asleep."

" Goy ! Uncle Sip, nebber tink o' dat."

" 'Spose as much," replied Sip, casting a compassionate glance towards him : " a moral carackter a'n't worth noffin !"

" Well, I tink you 'm right," said Cuff in deep cogitation ; " for don't 'member ebber havin got noffin by tellin truf, 'cept twice a floggin."

“Who guv it?” asked Sip.

“Big Dick de trapper once, cos I said I seed him shoot one o’ Major Harville’s ox. Tom Jenkins, de blacksmith, anoder, cos I said he shoe wrong and lame a horse. He flogged me, cos he said I had no business to meddle wid his perfession, nor to say noffin agin his repatation.”

“Sarve you right!” said Sip. “Ebery man mus stan up for his repatation.”

“But, Uncle Sip,” said the other, “I ’speck carackter and repatation is de same.”

“You ’s albays ’spectin,” replied Sip tartly, “and albays ’spectin wrong! I ’se tired o’ ar-gying. Young niggers should nebber argy wid ole niggers, cos ole niggers knows too much for ’em. Dere come Mas John hisself.”

As he spoke, a person came staggering beneath a heavy load. He was a short, thick man, dressed in a hunting-shirt of buckskin, a pair of white corderoy pantaloons, and an old white hat. When so near that his fea-

tures could be distinguished, it might have been observed that his forehead was low and broad, his hair black and wiry ; and a pair of twinkling eyes, bedded in wrinkles, bespoke a man habitually joyous in his disposition. As he approached, he sang an old hunting song, with a loudness that made the woods ring. But when he came near the fire, he ceased, and shouted to the elder of the two negroes.

“ Hilloah, Sip ! you old Scaramouch, come here and take my load ; my shoulders are almost broken by it.” As he spoke, he threw on the ground several wild turkeys. “ Look there, Sip, — that ’s something like,” said he, pointing to the heap. “ I ’ll wager not one of the whole troop will bring a load equal to that ; nine turkeys ! Why, Sip, it ’s a load for a horse.”

“ Mas John albays lucky,” said Sip, grinning, and stooping down to gather the birds. “ But, Mas John, how offen you shoot to kill ’em ?”

“Ha ! Sip,” replied the other, “that’s the beauty of it ! I killed them all in three shots.”

“Goy !” exclaimed Sip, as the ruling propensity of his master displayed itself. “Dat’s a tickler ! reckon Mas John hadn’t better tell it, cos ole Herbal won’t blieve it ; and when he says no, den d’odders won’t blieve it too.”

“I’ll tell you how we’ll manage it,” said the other, who commonly went by the appellation of Doctor, though the negroes always spoke of him by the name of Master John. “I will say I shot them in yonder tree,” pointing to a large sycamore, “and that you saw me—Do you understand ?”

Here Cuff, who had approached, gave a loud cough.

“Hark ye ! you black rascal,” said the Doctor, “what do you mean by coughing ?”

“Catch a berry bad cold last night,” replied Cuff ; “ground berry damp, Mas John ; a’n’t feel well all day.”

“Is it so?” said the Doctor, fumbling in his pocket, and bringing out a case of lancets.

“I’ll see what I can do for you; these night damps are apt to bring on affections of the chest. Sip, bring a peace of cord and tie his arm—I’ll bleed him.”

“Bleed nigger, Mas John!” exclaimed Cuff, opening his eyes, and his teeth chattering with terror. “What’s de use?”

“Blood-letting is excellent to prevent inflammation,” replied the Doctor, trying the point of his lancet on the back of his hand.

“Step out here, Cuff; I don’t wish to bloody the tent. You must not eat after this, Cuff: it might prove injurious.”

Cuff’s eyes opened still wider, and his lower jaw dropped, as he heard this last injunction.

“Here de string, Mas John,” said Sip, reaching out a piece of cord with a broad grin. “Tink Cuff not berry bell; a little bleedin do um good.”

Cuff shot back an angry glance in reply.

“Tink it make me worser ; bleedin nebber ’greed wid me.”

“Stretch out your arm,” said the Doctor, turning up his sleeves.

“Mas John,” said Cuff, arresting the hand of the Doctor, “ef you let me off, I’ll say I seed you shoot de turkeys all at one shot.”

The Doctor hesitated. Then he said, “I don’t want you to say more than the truth. Four at the first shot, three at the second, and two at the third. Can you recollect it? I’ll try you. Now ! how did I kill them?”

“Why, fust, Mas John,” said Cuff, showing his teeth, “you brung down four, den Mas John fired agin ; dat time you brung down tree.”

“Yes ! that ’s right.”

“Four and tree,” said Cuff, counting his fingers ; “how many am left, Mas John? I a’n’t good counter.”

“Nine altogether ! Four and three make

seven. Now there are two more," replied the Doctor.

"Well! den Mas John fire; he tuck good aim, and killed two more, and dem was all de flock."

"Well, Cuff, you *may* say that too," said the other, hesitating a little at this last suggestion; "and I think, upon the whole, you may get along without bleeding."

"Tink, Mas John," said Sip, showing his teeth, "Cuff run a risk if he not bled. It wouldn't hurt um to lose a leetle morsel."

"Don't be worried, Cuff," said the Doctor, soothingly, fearful lest he should lose his new ally. "Here! carry these turkeys to the tent, and don't forget the story,—first four, second three, third two: you'll remember it?"

"Oh yes, Mas John, I nebber forgets," said Cuff, baring his teeth, and giving vent to a low chuckle, he flung the turkeys across his shoulders, and carried them to the tent.

These being safely deposited, the negroes

returned to their former occupation, occasionally uttering some sly joke at the expense of the Doctor, or giving vent to a broad-mouthed peal of laughter, which made the woods ring, and which was not in the least restrained on the part of Sip by the presence of his master.

There is almost invariably a degree of affection subsisting between a master and domestic slaves, that inclines them to regard him more as a friend than an owner; and with him a favourite slave is considered rather as a member of his family than an article of property.

While the negroes were thus occupied, the Doctor employed himself in oiling the lock of his gun, in preparation for the sport of the ensuing day; at the same time arranging in his mind the most plausible manner of relating his exploit.

The encampment was the rendezvous of the whole party, who were now scattered

through the different skirts of forest in search of game : the Doctor was the first who had returned—with what success is already known.

CHAPTER XIII.

Night came, and in their lighted bower full late
The joy of converse had endured—when, hark !
Abrupt and loud, a summons shook their gate.

CAMPBELL.

NIGHT had closed in upon the woodland of the Nemahaw, and the hunters had returned from the chase. A large bright fire was kindled in the forest, and the group was assembled around it. There were several young men, one or two hunters, with features bronzed by exposure, and a little long-legged, thin-faced fellow, with a cadaverous complexion. His name was Weazen. He was professionally a tailor, though generally out of occupation,

owing to the inhabitants of that portion of the country being more addicted to the use of leather than cloth in their garments.

In the background stood the two negroes, Sip and Cuff, listening to the conversation of the whites, and occasionally edging in a word. At the moment of opening the scene, the Doctor was the most important personage in the group,—that is, he was making more noise than all the rest. The topic of discourse was the absence of Adherbal, who had not yet returned from hunting. The remarks of the Doctor were addressed to a heavy-looking man, who lay stretched upon his stomach, in front of the fire, with the sides of his head supported by the palms of his hands.

“Adherbal,” responded he to a previous remark of the Doctor’s, “has too often hunted in these forests to lose his way. He knows every hole and corner of this bottom, from the Missouri to the head waters.”

“He is but a man, Rifton,” replied the other, “and is not secure from an accident.”

“One from the States may speak thus,” said Rifton; “they know little of wood-craft. A patch of timber they call a forest, and *parara* hens they call *game*!”

“They do so,” replied the Doctor, “and they are right. The prairie hen is a species of grouse, and the grouse is a legitimate game bird.”

“I never heard of them by that name,” said the other: “I suppose it’s one of the new-fangled titles invented to the east’ard. They may serve to amuse those who shoot with smooth bores, and send half a handful of shot at every bird. It’s a mean way of sporting; there’s nothing so *clean* as a single bullet sent from a rifle; besides, it gives the game a chance: a deer might as well try to dodge a hail-storm as to go clear of the shot from one

of your scattering smooth bores. I like old Adherbal's maxim, 'Always give your game a chance.' "

"If Adherbal is not lost," said the Doctor, "what keeps him from the camp? It is now an hour after night-fall, and he is not a man to sleep in the woods when there's a tent to shelter him."

"He may have killed an elk, and stopped to skin it," said Rifton.

"That's the work of ten minutes," replied the Doctor.

"What says Sip?"

"I reckon," replied Sip, "he nebber loss him way. Herbal too ole for dat. He come droppin in afore long."

"I guess so," said Rifton; "and now suppose we look to our supper. Our fasting will neither help old Adherbal nor our own stomachs."

As he spoke, he drew his knife and cut a large slice from the roast which was hissing

temptingly before the fire. His example was followed, and for a short time not a word was uttered respecting the absent member of their party.

“ There !” said Rifton, throwing from him a clean-picked rib, and rubbing his knife upon his sleeve preparatory to thrusting it into its scabbard ; “ I hope old Adherbal may make as hearty a meal. I ’ll warrant he ’ll bring some venison. A deer is never safe in his neighbourhood.”

“ When he comes,” said the Doctor, “ I prophesy that he brings nothing but good ; for it ’s an old saying, that *bad* news flies *fast*.”

“ Then your prophecy and your old saying are both *out*,” said a harsh voice behind him, “ for I do bring bad news.” At the same time the speaker threw down half a buck, and advanced where the full light of the fire fell upon his figure.

He was short, broad, and muscular. His

hair must once have been jet black, but from age was now sprinkled with grey, and as far as could be seen was strong and wiry. His head was covered by a red woollen cap. His face was so tanned, from long exposure, that his features seemed chiselled from mahogany. Beneath a leathern hunting-coat, he wore a red flannel shirt, open at the throat, and displaying a massive chest, covered with a mat of iron-grey hair. He wore trousers of coarse cloth, with leathern leggings drawn over them, and gartered at the knee with a broad band of red worsted. Like the others, he carried a knife in his belt,—with this peculiarity, that his knife was twice the length and double the weight of the others, being of the sort used by persons who make a long and habitual sojourn in the woods, where the knife occasionally serves as a hatchet. He held a rifle, and the accoutrements of shot-pouch and powder-horn were not wanting.

“ I do bring bad news, Doctor,” said Adherbal ; “ news that will start us from our hunting-ground, and will require all to keep a bright look-out—ay, and this very night too, or we may wake up without scalps.”

“ Have you seen Indians, Adherbal ?” eagerly demanded the Doctor.

“ Ay ! Pawnees.”

“ But they are at peace with us.”

“ When we outnumber them ; but they have a dreadful aversion to let a white scalp slip through their fingers.”

“ They may be Konzas or Otoes, who are friendly.”

“ They carry bows and arrows, and are dressed in buffalo skins,” replied Adherbal. “ The Konzas and Otoes use rifles, and wear blankets. It’s impossible that I should be wrong.”

“ How near were you to them ?” demanded the other.

“ I touched them. The case is this :—I had

been hunting through this bottom without starting any thing except a few turkeys and other small reptiles. At near night-fall I roused a buck. I wounded him, and he scampered for the timber, where he fell. In following his track, I came upon the skeleton of a man : beside it lay a Pawnee bow, a quiver of arrows, and a buffalo-skin. He had been killed by a bullet that lodged agin his backbone. Not far from him was the remains of an elk. After looking at him, I skinned my deer, packed part of him on my shoulders, hung the rest on a tree, and started for the camp, following the stream. On my way I found another Pawnee skeleton."

"Pshaw!" interrupted the Doctor; "do you intend to frighten us with a story of dead men's bones? It takes months to make a dead body a skeleton."

"Not when the wolves and buzzards get hold of it," replied Adherbal calmly.

"Is that all you have to tell?"

“ No ! I seed about a dozen Pawnee skeletons, all alive, with flesh on their bones, and arrows at their backs, walking across a hill. It was the watching them that kept me so long. They’re camped in this wood, towards the Missouri. They had a skrimmage with whites or Konzas, and are a little unwelcome as neighbours.”

No reply was made to this remark. The negroes sat with open eyes and mouths. The silence, however, was of short duration, and was broken by one of the young men.

“ By my soul, Adherbal !” said he, “ this tale has a strange effect. Here are ten men cowed by the very idea of a dozen Pawnees !”

“ ’Tis not fear,” said Adherbal, “ nor is it the dread of coming to blows with a few Pawnees. But most of us are old hunters, and know something of the ways and habits of Ingens. These few Pawnees would never have ventured here without they had numbers within hail. All the tribes about here have

grudges of some sort to settle with them. I'll answer for it, there's not short of a hundred within yelling distance."

"Even supposing it were so," replied the other, "why should the anticipations of a danger weigh thus heavily upon us? I doubt whether one here is unwilling to abide the result. Besides," added he, casting a malicious glance towards Weazen, who sat in great tribulation listening to the evil prophecies of the old hunter, "if it comes to the worst, we can but die."

Adherbal saw not his drift. Casting a grave and stern look at him, he answered, "'Tis easy to talk of dying when death is far off: when it comes, you will find it wonderful agin the grain, and mighty hard of digestion. I've heerd young men speak of it with as much coolness as yourself, and I've seed them same folks when the death-fit was on them. I set little vally on speeches of that natur: thur unnat'ral, not to say ridiculous. An Ingen

never brags of his willingness to die; he does his best to keep clear of arrows, tomahawks, and scalping-knives: but when his time comes, there's no flinching; he sings his death-song, and meets his fate in a respectable manner."

"And feels grateful for it, I suppose," said the other.

"I never axed him," replied Adherbal; "but I never heerd say he didn't. I'm hungry," said he, abruptly turning to Sip; "let's have some fodder."

"Dar a piece o' ven'son," said Sip, "and one o' Mas John's turkeys, what he kill."

"How many did he kill?"

"He kill nine," put in Cuff; "Uncle Sip and me bof seed um."

"Did you, Sip?—Take a bucket, and get some water from the branch." This was said for the purpose of getting him out of the way; for from long practice he had acquired such dexterity in lying his master through all his extravagant stories, that it was difficult to

detect him in his doublings. Sip saw the drift of his mission, and reluctantly set out.

“Cuff,” said Adherbal, “tell exactly how the Doctor killed them turkeys. Did he do it handsome?”

“Mas John albays shoot handsum,” replied Cuff. “He jest step off, and—”

“Stop!” said Adherbal, grasping his rifle, and rising to his feet. “Did you hear any thing?”

All listened in silence.

“Nothing!” said Rifton after a moment’s breathless attention. “You are thinking of the Pawnees.”

“Mayhap I am,” replied the old hunter. “But I heerd the crack of a fire-weapon of some sort. It may come agin.”

All were hushed, and in a moment the suspicion of Adherbal was verified by the sound of distant fire-arms.

“There’s no mistake about that; them’s rifle-cracks, or I’m no judge. I’ll soon find out

who carry the weapons. Rifton," said he, "suppose you and the rest draw from the fire."

Rifton turned and said to those around him, "A light will help an Indian to put an arrow into a man. Let those who want to be shot stay where they are."

"A judgmatical observation," said Adherbal, walking off.

The party took the hint of Rifton, and arming themselves, retired to await the report of their scout.

Nearly half an hour had elapsed, when they were startled by the trampling of hoofs and the breaking of bushes. In a moment Adherbal glided in, followed by the troop of horsemen who had started from Wolf Hill in search of them.

Warm congratulations followed. They were interrupted by Norton stepping forward with his gun. "Is that a bear skulking from yonder hollow log?" said he.

“It isn’t a bear,” screamed a shrill voice. “It’s me!—it’s me, Mr. Weazen. Don’t shoot!” At the same time the tailor emerged from his place of concealment.

“What was you doing there?” demanded Adherbal.

“I was afraid of Indians, and so I hid myself,” replied the other, making no attempt to conceal his cowardice. “My profession is tailoring. I was never cut out for a soldier, and so keep clear of fighting when I can.”

“You’re too contemptible to be mad with,” said Adherbal, eyeing him with great scorn. “If Norton had shot you, he would have wasted powder.”

“I agree with you, and am well content that he was not guilty of so needless a piece of extravagance,” replied Weazen.

“Pish!” said the old man: “if you had as much spunk as gab, you’d be good for something. As it is, you’re uncommon useless.” As he spoke, he turned from him, and com-

menced arrangements for the accommodation of the new-comers.

The bustle attending their arrival was soon over. The Rangers, wrapped in their blankets, were stretched round their night fire, buried in profound sleep. Contrary to their usual custom, all lay with their yagers by their sides, instead of stocking them, as is usual when no immediate danger is apprehended. Not one had removed from his person shot-pouch or powder-horn. It was evident, that though they slept soundly, they were prepared for the worst.

Around one fire, however, was a more watchful group, composed of Norton, Arden, Herrick, and Adherbal, besides one or two of the hunting-party. The eager face of Sip and the cadaverous visage of Weazen were also added. The latter had joined himself to the company, as terror prevented him from sleeping, and even rendered him afraid to remain by himself.

In the dusk of the woods, every flare of the fire revealed the horses at pasture. They had been staked immediately on the arrival of the party,—that is, they had been tethered with long ropes to short wooden pegs driven into the ground, so deep as to admit of the cord's playing freely over their tops, to prevent the animal's *winding himself up* in the night, by movement about the pivot. This precaution, rarely taken by a hunter, except under apprehension, served as additional evidence of the feeling of insecurity.

An earnest conversation was going on at the fire, and a deep anxiety was seated on the brows of all.

“You think,” said Arden, addressing Adherbal, “the gang you saw to-day are the same that we met this evening?”

“Most undoubtedly I do,” replied Adherbal; “and I reckon they was watching you from the top of the hill where I seed them.”

“And you, Norton, said he, “do you think

this band connected with those you saw two days ago?"

"As far as a man can speak of a thing which he cannot swear to, I am sure of it."

"But still it's uncertain," said Arden.

"Uncertain!" said Adherbal; "I'd rather swear that they was kith and kin to the band, than that they was not. When a strong force is seated in one of these bottoms, there's always small parties loping about, in the hollows and thickets. I know them of old. The sooner we leave this bottom, the more of us there will be to go. It's not a bad plan in them Rangers to sleep now, for they'll want their strength to-morrow; but while *they* are napping, some one should keep an eye about us."

"That has been attended to," said Arden.

"Sentinels are out."

"Are they hunters? or are they from the settlements?"

"They are Rangers."

“That’s wrong,” said Adherbal. “They are of no account whatsoemedever. I’ll go myself; Norton will join us; there’s Sip, too, who is accustomed to the woods, and though he is black, it’s all in his favour, for he is so much the colour of darkness, that it would bother an Indian to discover him, unless by the white of his eyes.”

Sip’s mouth expanded into a broad grin at the remark, and he instantly intimated his acquiescence in the arrangement, by bringing his rifle to the light, and carefully examining the flint and priming.

“It would be well for you, Mr. Arden, to add yourself to the sleepers,” said Norton, rising. “Our watchfulness will warn you in case of danger, and you will need rest to prepare you for a day of labour, which I dare predict the morrow will be.”

“Your advice is doubtless well meant,” replied Arden; “but I am in command of this troop, and, as far as I can, shall look to their

safety. I will watch. If I am of no service, I shall at least be conscious of having done my duty."

"Be it so," said Norton: "we'll rouse Rifton. I'll have an eye over the horses. There may be an attempt to *rush* them. They are a strong temptation to an Indian."

As he spoke, he strode off; and having awakened Rifton, they set out in different directions.

Adherbal went in another quarter; and Sip was just setting out, when Weazen proposed to accompany him, and was refused. "I reckon," said Sip, "Mas Weazen so skary, he might give a false 'larm. He'd better creep in de dead tree agin, cos dare he 'm safe."

A faint laugh from Weazen answered the speech of the negro, who shouldered his gun and walked off.

"Perhaps Sip was right," said he to himself as the negro disappeared; "so I'll follow his advice. If I have no courage in me, it

isn't my fault. I would have no objection to be brave if it were possible."

With this philosophic remark, he moved off, and was soon safely ensconced in his old place of concealment.

None remained at the fire except Herrick, wrapped in his blanket; nor was any sound heard except the heavy breathing of the sleepers, or occasionally an exclamation from some troubled dreamer.

CHAPTER XIV.

The country, (nominally now at peace,)
Is overrun with—God knows who: they fly
By night, and disappear with sun-rise.

And there he comes!—

He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

Werner.

THERE is a deep and Sabbath stillness resting amid the dark gloom of a western forest. The giant trees shoot up their smooth and branchless trunks, like so many vast columns, uniting their arching summits at an immense height into a lofty canopy, and overshadowing the satellite plants that cluster around

their massive bases. Were it not for the enormous prostrate wrecks strewn on the earth, mighty even as the trees still rearing aloft their leafy tops, we might suppose that the slow poison of age would be expended upon them in vain. Beneath them, wild vines are matting and twining amid thick fringes of brushwood, and sometimes reaching to the tall tree tops, hang in festoons from limb to limb. These spots of rank luxuriance are here and there relieved by glades in the woodland, and small areas of open ground, free from underwood.

From the lateness of the season, the leaves were beginning to disappear from the trees, and covered the ground in every direction. Those that still clung to the branches were tinted red with autumn's hectic. Still there were enough remaining upon a low thicket of brushwood to form an effectual screen for a party of six Indians who occupied a spot within about two miles of Wolf Hill, and one pe-

culiarly adapted both for concealment and observation. The shrubbery clustered thickly round the top of a swelling mound, shrouding them within its enclosure, while the elevated situation gave them a commanding view of the forest around. It was no uncommon thing to see Indians strolling in small parties through the woods, in this neighbourhood; for at but a few miles' distance were the villages of the Delawares, Shawanees, and several other migratory tribes. The members of these, with the characteristic restlessness of their race, were for ever on the move, roaming through the forest, haunting like spectres the land which was fast fleeing from their grasp, and lingering with melancholy attachment beneath those massy trees that told how mighty was the land that had once been their own.

There was something, however, about the present group that pointed them out as kin to none of the tribes just mentioned. They

had not the gay dress that marked the civilized Indians. No silver trinkets glittered in the sunshine, no gaudy ribands or flaunting head-gear fluttered in the wind. They were sternly simple in their attire. A single robe, formed of the shaggy hide of the buffalo, was girded round the shoulders of each, coarse leggins of the same material covered their limbs, and a few streaks of paint, and that of the darkest hue, were carefully drawn over their features. A bow, and a quiver of buffalo skin, containing about thirty arrows, with a knife and a short heavy war-club, completed their offensive equipments. Their heads were closely shorn, and ornamented with a few feathers taken from the tail of the hawk or eagle, and hanging to the long scalp-lock.

Besides their wild and uncouth garb, there was another circumstance that pointed them out as intruders in the land. The neighbouring tribes of Indians were all at peace with

each other. Yet this party was evidently armed and painted for war. There was a something of caution in the very spot they had chosen for their resting-place; and there was an appearance of quiet watchfulness about them, that bespoke an apprehension of danger, though altogether unmingled with fear. They were evidently bound on some errand of blood; and their caution clearly arose from the feeling of insecurity, engendered by lurking within the territories of a hostile tribe.

In the centre of the group was a tall Indian—the most conspicuous of the party. He was in the prime of manhood. His face was darker than those that surrounded him, with a peculiarly sinister expression about the eye. His forehead was wrinkled with deep and massive furrows, the branded impress of corroding passions. A host of scars disfigured his features, and seamed that part of his body left uncovered by his robe. They showed,

however, that whatever evil might have found birth in his brooding brain, he had not lacked courage to carry it into effect.

His restless eye was set deep beneath his ponderous brow, where it glittered like a diamond ; and there was something about the lips, thin and tightly drawn over his teeth, leaving those of the lower jaw a little bare, that gave an expression of cool and savage intrepidity to his whole countenance.

The rest of the Indians in company were apparently inferior in rank, and clearly wanted his energy of character. They lay crouching on the earth, occasionally casting their eyes through the interstices of the bushes, and then slowly gazing on his features, as if they looked to him for counsel. He, however, continued some time in silence.

Once or twice when a distant noise sounded through the forest, he slowly raised his head, and gave a single long look in the direction ; then, as if satisfied, relapsed into his

reverie. At length, apparently impatient, he rose and moved through the bushes, to a spot from whence he might obtain a more uninterrupted view. He remained there some time, gazing on the distant prospect, and then returned to his first position.

“The sun was shining upon the tree-tops,” said he, “when Sharatack stole towards the lodge of the pale face. His rays are now shooting between the trunks of the trees, yet he returns not to the spot where Tarahasse awaits him. Is it well?”

The Indian to whom he addressed these words was younger than himself. His voice floated back in the silver tones of music, as he answered.

“Sharatack is wise. He has glided like a snake into the lodge of the pale face. He lingers that he may strike sure.”

“The pale face is a dog,” said the other. “His howl will call his brothers. Sharatack is alone.”

This implied doubt as to the safety of Sharatack was scouted by the younger Indian. "The pale face is blind. He cannot see the snake when he lurks in the grass. The feet of the white man are short. Can he overtake the deer? Can he steal through the bushes like the wild cat? Can he come upon the Pawnee, when asleep?—Sharatack never sleeps. His eye is never closed. His ear is never shut. He laughs at the pale face, for the pale face is a woman."

"The pale face is a woman," replied Tarahasse. "When the red warrior meets him, his knife is red, and the pale face gives his death-cry. But the ears of his brothers are open, and they fly to the spot. The red skin is alone. Can the wild cat escape the hunters, when they have surrounded the tree that holds him? Sharatack is the wild cat—the pale face is the hunter. Does the young warrior hear my words?"

"He does. The words are wise," replied

the other ; “ but Sharatack will lie in the bushes. If the pale face comes upon him, he will raise his war-cry, and Tarahasse will hear it. Sharatack will not be alone.”

“ Ugh !” burst from the chest of one of the group, while his extended hand pointed down an open glade of forest. The eyes of all were turned in that direction, while the single word “ Sharatack !” escaped them.

With a swift tread, the object of their expectation, a princely Indian, in the heyday of strength, youth, and manly perfection, advanced. In his hand was a steel-headed tomahawk—an unusual article of warfare to one of a tribe so wild. The haughty bearing of the young warrior, his flashing eye, and calm, proud features, pointed him out as one born to command. In a few moments he was in the midst of the group. Not a word was uttered. All waited for him to speak. He cast a hasty glance around, to see that none were missing.

“ ’Tis well,” said he. “ When my warriors send their arrows, the death-cry follows. When they follow the trail of an enemy, they never lose his track ; and when they crouch beneath the bushes, the eagle flies over them, but his eye is darkened.”

He paused. There was no interruption, but the dilating eyes of his auditors showed that these words of approbation had full weight. The countenance of Tarahasse alone was unmoved. He looked on with no approving air.

Sharatack gazed on him for an instant, and appeared to dive into his thoughts. “ Is Tarahasse tired of the war-path ?” said he. “ Would he break his bow, and live with the women ?”

The veteran looked steadily in the face of the other, but he answered without appearance of anger.

“ Tarahasse is a warrior. When he was

a boy, his father said to him—‘Go upon the war-trail. Strike the Sioux. I am old and withered like a sapless tree: let my son be a warrior in my place.’ Tarahasse obeyed his words. He followed the Sioux like a wolf on the track of a deer. He brought his scalp to the lodge. His father looked upon it and said it was good. From that day Tarahasse has been a warrior. His youth departed like the fleeting wind. Still he was a warrior, and his war-cry still is heard. He will never live with the women. He has spoken. It is enough!”

When he finished, a deep guttural sound of approbation followed.

“It is well,” replied Sharatack. “My brother speaks like a warrior; but now let him keep his hand upon his mouth. There is a singing bird in the woods. Sharatack would catch it. Let his brothers follow him, without crushing a leaf. Let them move and not

be seen, for the bird is more timid than the deer."

He beckoned them to follow him. They cautiously left their lair, and disappeared behind a cluster of shrubbery.

CHAPTER XV.

And summer was the tide, and sweet the hour,
When sire and daughter saw, with fleet descent,
An Indian from his bark approach their bower,
Of briskin'd limb and swarthy lineament.

Gertrude of Wyoming.

For more than an hour after the departure of the Rangers from Wolf Hill, with Arden and Herrick, to succour the hunters on the Nemahaw, a fair face was wistfully looking, from a window of Major Harville's dwelling, over the waste, and scanning with a tearful eye the distant ridges, in the hope of catching a farewell glimpse of the hardy band. But time sped on, and they appeared not.

With a heavy sigh Lucy Wilford withdrew from the window, and throwing a light straw bonnet over her dark tresses, left the house. She took her course along a narrow pathway that wound through the forest skirt-ing the Missouri. It was a soft golden afternoon. The woods were echoing to the notes of the feathered choristers ; the dark tree trunks were dotted with yellow flecks, as their leaves intercepted the sun-rays ; the swift river scudded along, glittering with waving streaks of sunlight, or boiled up, foaming and writhing in a thousand silver eddies ; and the whole air seemed bathed in mellow warmth. But even amid this universal joy of Nature, Lucy was sad. The birds carolled around her, the water murmured onward in its course, the trees drooped low their purpled leaves ; but her ear heard not the music, and though her gaze wandered around it, took no note of the foliage. Her thoughts had other occupation.

The momentary feeling of pride which had

supported her as Herrick departed, had disappeared. Her vows to retaliate, to forget, were no longer remembered. He was gone, perhaps for ever. She had seen him, they had met, and parted in anger. Perhaps they might never meet again.

Woman's pride sustains her in all extremities. It teaches her to dissemble. It teaches her cheek to blanch not ; and when her soul is sinking within her, it teaches her to bury in her own bosom the feelings which are withering her life, and yet are the objects of ridicule to the cold hearts around her. But she cannot conceal them from herself. She may deceive the multitude, and in the open glare of the world wear a bright and happy look. Yet there are moments of sorrow, of solitude, when no eye is upon her, that the gushes of bitterness burst forth : the mask of joy is then thrown aside, and she gives full vent to the surcharged feelings of an aching heart.

Slowly and sadly Lucy strolled on.

“He might have given me one kind word,” murmured she—“one—but one—I should not have felt so lonely then ; but now—”

A tear trembled in her eye as she spoke, and a half sob choked her utterance. Unconscious whither she was going, she loitered on, following the path as it wove between the massive trees. Sometimes it gave a long perspective down deep vistas of forest ; and at others was so closely fringed with shrubbery as to rustle her dress as she went on ; at every turn disclosing fresh objects to view, and hiding the distance already passed.

Whilst wandering with her mind absorbed in its own heavy musings, her attention was attracted by a heavy footstep. She turned with a feeling of uneasiness, but was relieved by perceiving her father coming down the pathway.

“Ha ! girl !” said the old gentleman as he approached, “you have strolled far, too far ; and a long walk I have had too,” continued

he, half laughing. "I would never have thought of following this wild alley, had not one of the soldiers seen you going down it. I was on the point of turning back, thinking he was mistaken, when I found your glove. Do you know what distance you have come?"

"Scarcely," replied Lucy, "I should suppose, half a mile."

"*Half* a mile! Two miles would be nearer the fact. But turn back. I have news for you. And yet," added he, "I am half vexed about it. Herrick Ostrand has been at the garrison within three hours, knew I was here, and yet left it without seeing me."

Lucy leaned forward to pluck a leaf, but made no answer.

"Did you hear me, Lucy?" demanded he.

"Yes, father; but perhaps Mr. Ostrand
——"

"Stop! stop! I will hear no excuses. You are always ready with them:—" "Though," added he good-humouredly, at the same time

looking her full in the face, “ perhaps he *did* see *you*. I know he always professed a very great *respect* for *you*.—Nay, don’t interrupt me,” said he, seeing Lucy preparing to speak ; “ I know what you would say : you mean that he has professed great respect for me also. That’s all very true ; but respect towards a young lady is apt to merge into something warmer. I am also inclined to think that the respect of Herrick to Miss Wilford is exactly in that state.”

“ Father,” replied Lucy in confusion, “ I can assure, you are altogether mistaken.”

“ Pshaw ! girl, I am an old man, but I am not blind.”

“ Father,” added Lucy, “ do not talk thus. I am sure that Mr. Ostrand has never dreamed of such a thing as you now insinuate.”

“ Lucy ! have you seen him to-day ?”

“ I have,” was the reluctant answer.

“ And spoken to him ?”

“ No, father.”

“ Not speak to him ! that ’s strange ! Did he speak to you ? ”

“ I think not,” said Lucy faintly.

“ You *think* not. Methinks you might be sure on so simple a point. Did he see you ? ”

Lucy made no answer.

“ Come, Lucy,” added he affectionately, “ answer me :—did he see you ? ”

“ He did,” murmured she, while the tears gushed into her eyes.

“ And recognised you, Lucy ? ”

“ I believe so,” was the low answer.

“ What !—saw you—recognised you, and did not speak to you ! Why ! what does he mean—the puppy ? He made my house his home at St. Louis.”

“ But, father,” interrupted Lucy, “ it was not his fault. I was engaged—that is—Mr. Arden was with me.”

“ Well ! is that an excuse ? Could he not speak to you, because another was present ? ”

This is very strange. I know him well. I have loved him as my own son—and I had hoped—I had thought that——” He turned abruptly to Miss Wilford:—“ Lucy, when you and he were together, what did you talk about?”

“ Talk about, father?—I—I—I cannot recollect.”

“ No? I suspect there are *some* parts of these conversations that you will *never* forget.”

Lucy hung down her head as her heart whispered how true were his words; but at that moment the cracking of a twig caught her ear. “ Hark ! father,” said she, glad of an interruption, “ I hear a footstep.”

As she spoke, the bushes rustled, and an Indian strode into the path. He was young and finely formed. He looked like an Apollo cast in bronze. He was naked to the waist, and highly coloured with war-paint. In his hand he held a tomahawk. A bow and a

quiver of arrows hung at his back, and his leggins were fringed with scalp-hair.

He stood directly in their path, his eye fixed upon the features of the beautiful girl. Instinctively she shrank to her father, clinging convulsively to his arm, while her own eye, which at first had rested with admiration on the proud savage, was now riveted upon him with indefinable terror.

“ Let us go, father,” said she in a hurried tone ; “ that Indian makes me shudder.”

“ Nay, Lucy ! ’tis mere fancy. He is some hunter from one of the neighbouring villages.”

“ It may be,” answered she ; “ but he looks wild and savage. Let us pass him, for Heaven’s sake !”

“ Be it so, my dear girl. You will soon see how groundless were your terrors.”

As he spoke, he moved forward ; but, contrary to his expectation, the Indian stirred not. Seeing this, Mr. Wilford stepped aside,

yielding the path ; but the savage extended his tomahawk directly in front of them, while with the other arm he motioned them back.

“ Ha ! what means this ? Give me your hand, Lucy. I ’ll soon settle this matter.”

As he spoke, he grasped the arm of his daughter and advanced. But now the heavy hand of the Indian was pressed upon his shoulder.

“ How ’s this ! ” cried the old man, striking up the arm. “ Perhaps, though,” added he, more calmly, to appease the fear of his daughter, “ it is some jest.”

The savage soon put an end to any supposition of this nature. He gave vent to no gust of passion. His face was calm as before ; though the proud curve of his lip grew somewhat haughtier, as if he deigned not to show resentment towards those already in his power. Again raising his arm, he waved them back ; at the same time he uttered a low bleat, such as escapes from a young fawn when seeking for

its dam. It was answered by a similar cry from a distant quarter.

“ Ensnared !” exclaimed Mr. Wilford. “ Fly, Lucy ! fly to the garrison. I can grapple this fellow, till you escape.”

As he spoke, the chivalrous old man sprang forward and throttled the savage. The movement was so sudden, that the Indian was taken by surprise, and for a moment staggered. He, however, soon recovered himself, and with iron strength turned upon his antagonist.

“ Fly, Lucy !” again cried Mr. Wilford, conscious that his struggles could be of but short duration. “ Go ! go ! for God’s sake save yourself !”

Still Lucy moved not to obey, but, kneeling, and clasping the knees of the Indian, “ Spare him !” said she ; “ he is old. There can be no honour in a victory like this. We will give you gold, blankets, every thing — every thing—only spare him !”

She reflected not that she was speaking to

one probably ignorant of her language ; nor that his creed taught him to slay alike the old and young, and that the glory from all was equal.

The savage heeded her not, but turned his whole attention to securing his antagonist. He struck no blow. His object was evidently not to slay, but capture. He wreathed his arms round his opponent's body, and pinioning his hands, repeated his signal several times.

The efforts of Mr. Wilford were now so great, that to hold him it was necessary for the Indian to shake off Lucy. With a sudden jerk he extricated himself, and with such violence that she was thrown to the distance of several yards, where she lay senseless, with blood gushing from her mouth.

“ Monster ! you have killed my child ! ” exclaimed the old man, freeing himself from the encircling grasp of his foe. He thrust his hand into his bosom for a dirk, but at that

instant was seized from behind. A knife flashed past his eyes and pierced his right arm. At the same time he was thrown down, and a group of wild faces gleamed over him. Again the knife was raised to strike, but its descending motion was arrested by the Indian who had first attacked him. At the same time, he addressed the other in his own tongue.

“Has Tarahasse drunk the fire-water of the white man, that he has lost his senses?”

“Tarahasse is a warrior,” replied the other, erecting his form with that air of pride always worn by an Indian when speaking of himself, for humility is not a virtue with them.

“Yet,” continued the other, still retaining the armed hand, “he would do the deed of a child.”

“The pale face is a dog—he carries a scalp. Tarahasse is a warrior—he would have it.”

“Behold the smoke of the pale face’s lodge,” returned the other, “The white men

will hunt the Pawnee like a deer. The Pawnees are few, the white warriors are like the leaves of the trees. The pale face and the fair skin must live."

For a moment or two Tarahasse remained silent.

"Sharatack," said he at length, "speaks well. Tarahasse has heard him. *They* shall live!"

It was craft, not mercy, that dictated the decision. The place of encounter was a path that led to the garrison, through a frequented portion of woodland. The keen-sighted savages had observed parties of soldiers strolling through the woods in quest of game. Should these come upon the body of Mr. Wilford or his daughter, an alarm would be given, and a pursuit would be the consequence. There were many in the garrison experienced in tracking a trail; and in the neighbourhood were several small tribes of civilized Indians at deadly enmity with the Pawnees. These

could have been upon the trail, and in such numbers, as to render escape a matter of much doubt. All these circumstances had been weighed by Tarahasse before he uttered his reply.

The opinion of Sharatack, or, as he was called by the whites, the Hawk Chief, was the opinion of all. Two seized Mr. Wilford and hurried him through the bushes; at the same time a powerful Indian raised Lucy in his arms and bore her along.

In front stalked the young Hawk, occasionally scanning the forest vistas with a falcon glance, but never for a moment arresting his steps. They kept on for some distance, when he suddenly paused, and uttered an emphatic "Ugh!"

The band stopped short and sudden; every eye flashed round, every ear was open. In a moment, a distant voice was heard carolling a song, while occasionally one or two joined in chorus.

Without a word, the Hawk Chief pointed to a clump of shrubbery, at the same time warning his prisoners to silence. A movement of his hand to his knife signified the punishment of a breach of his commands. He then crouched in the thicket.

Scarcely were they ensconced, when seven or eight soldiers, armed with muskets, came straggling along. A thrill of hope shot through the bosom of the captives. There was a probability that the trail might be seen, and lead to further examination; and in case of an encounter, there was little doubt but that it would terminate favourably to the whites.

“Should they come nearer,” whispered Mr. Wilford to Lucy, “I will hail them, come what may.”

The movement and whisper did not escape the eye of Tarahasse. A scowl, black as midnight, passed over his face. He jerked his knife from the scabbard, and rightly es-

timating the feelings of the father, drew Lucy back, and pressed the point of the blade against her throat.

“ Monster !” exclaimed Mr. Wilford.

The eye of the Indian flashed fire, and he raised his knife, as if to strike. Lucy closed her eyes and breathed a silent prayer. But the blow came not. Caution stayed his hand.

“ I’ll swear I heard some one speak,” said a soldier nearest the Indians, at the same time pausing to listen. “ Hark ! it may come again.”

“ It might have been the bleat of a deer,” said one, after some moments had elapsed without a repetition of the sound. “ I have been deceived in that way myself. A young fawn when entangled in the bushes will cry like a child.”

“ It had not that sound ; it was a strong clear voice,—at least I thought so ; but I must have been mistaken. Go on, Dixon ; take up the song, and we will chime in at the chorus.

Ha ! what's this ! a broken bush—pea-vines trampled down, — a deer might have gone through here, but it looks too heavy ; — a riband, too, and a moccasin print !”

“ Some party of the Delawares, I suppose ; or perhaps Shawanese,” replied Dixon, looking at the print. “ You have lived so long up the Missouri, and have been so much in the habit of watching trails and foot-prints, that you forget you are now in a place where all tribes are friendly. You might meet hundreds of Indians here, not one of whom would harbour an ill will against you.”

“ You are right ; let's move on.”

As he spoke, he threw his musket heavily in the hollow of his arm, and strode on, followed by the rest. Their forms one after another were hidden by the shrubbery ; the crushing of dead limbs grew more and more distant, and at last died away ; and with it the last hope of succour faded from the fugitives.

When all was still, Sharatack rose, and motioning the others to remain quiet, cautiously stole out to reconnoitre. Not a bush escaped his eye ; not a tree was unobserved. Frequent surprise, and constant apprehension of enemies, had rendered vigilance not only an essential part of his character, but necessary to his very existence. With his dusky form screened behind a bush, his snake-like eye glancing in every direction, and his hand raised behind his ear, he stood taking his survey. There was nothing to be heard, save now and then the chirp of some bird ; nothing to be seen, except some feathered tenant of the leafy groves, as he flitted among the trees. Turning round, he uttered a low exclamation that called Tarahasse to his side. A short consultation took place between them ; another keen, scrutinising examination of bush, tree, and vista ; then a few words signified to the others his intention to push forward. In a minute all were in motion. The Hawk Chief

led the way, while the Indian who had previously carried Lucy now hurried her through the mazes of the thick forest.

They no longer kept to the pathway, but plunged into the densest and most unfrequented parts of the bottom. As they proceeded, the light of day was almost shut out by the dark umbrage of trees, and not a sound was heard, save the distant cry of some solitary woodpecker, or the ominous croak of a deep-throated raven, as he flapped through the gloom so congenial to his nature.

As the distance from the garrison increased, they stopped frequently to consult. The portion of country they were traversing was evidently unknown to them ; and though they pushed rapidly forward, it was with unrelaxing caution. This lasted until they had attained several miles up the Missouri, when they suddenly struck into a broad trail, deeply indented with hoof-marks. Here a halt was called, while Sharatack left the party and fol-

lowed the pathway, carefully examining the marks. Upon his return, a few words and as many gestures explained the result of his observations.

The trail announced the neighbourhood of those they did not like, and they again betook themselves to the forest, and pursued their journey amid its deepest and darkest recesses.

CHAPTER XVI.

By paths as covert as the birth of thought :

* * * * *

They come, we see not how, nor know we whence.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

THE moon had risen in clear and cloudless beauty, and the Nemahaw glittered like a gemmed stream beneath its rays. The tall scathed trunks that here and there reared themselves, overtopping the loftiest trees of the present growth, looked like so many giant pillars of wrought silver.

The whole band of Rangers seemed buried in profound slumber. There was, apparently, but one sleepless individual; and that was

Herrick. He sat musing by the fire. There was a feverishness about him that prevented rest. His thoughts were constantly dwelling upon the scene that he had witnessed between Arden and Lucy at Wolf Hill. It was in vain that he summoned all his resolution to combat his attachment. The more he examined his feelings towards her, the more he felt his interest deepen, until he could not but acknowledge with what bitterness he would see her the wife of another.

“Fool, fool that I was!” said he bitterly. “When she loved me—when she was mine—securely mine—to let pass an opportunity that will never return, and thus lose her for ever!”

A train of gloomy ideas followed this inward confession. It was broken by the report of a rifle. A shrill scream followed, and Sip, brandishing his gun, sprang through the blaze of the fire, and vanished in the opposite darkness. The loud shout of Adherbal was

heard, and he came leaping like a deer through the tall bushes, with his rifle grasped in both hands. His red cap, which gave his head the appearance of having been scalped, was visible for a moment, and then disappeared; though his heavy crashing steps, as he forced a path through the brushwood, could be heard for some time.

Herrick was already on his feet: followed by Rifton, he rushed after them. The body of a dead Indian lay within a few yards of the fire. None of the others had stopped at this; so he pushed forward, following the sound of their footsteps. He heard the shouts of the roused Rangers, and the loud orders of Arden.

Rifton kept by his side, bursting a path through all impediments.

“This way! this way!” cried he; “they have turned here.” As he spoke, he pointed to the right of the course they were then pursuing. Scarcely had they turned, before the

crushing sound ceased, and a loud yell followed.

“That voice came from an Indian throat,” said Herrick. “There’s trouble yonder.—On ! on !” With strong leaps they cleared the bushes, and though they had lost the noise of breaking twigs, other sounds soon convinced them that they were in the right course. They could hear the tramp of feet, as of persons engaged in struggle, and the hard breathing and stifled cries of the combatants. In a moment more they were in full view of the fight. Adherbal was on the ground in fierce grapple with an Indian, whose buffalo robe lying beside him, his bow and arrows, and all his accoutrements, at once bespoke him a Pawnee.

Sip was in even a more critical situation. He was keeping up a kind of defensive fight with two. He held by the arms a slight, ill-looking savage, whom in spite of his struggles he was using as a shield between himself and

the upraised tomahawk of a gigantic opponent who was pressing him at all points, but afraid to venture a decisive blow, lest it should harm his comrade.

The sudden appearance of Herrick and Rifton changed the posture of affairs. Without pausing, and before either expected it, the savage sprang forward and gripped Herrick by the throat. So sudden was the movement, that before he had time to raise his rifle, he was thrown on the ground and disarmed. The triumph, however, of his enemy was momentary, for Rifton placed the muzzle of his rifle to his head and fired. The Indian relaxed his hold, and fell without a cry.

This was but the work of a moment. The two then ran to Sip, who was doing his best against his opponent, at the same time favouring him with an open expression of his opinion.

“You got in der wrong box, my chicken,” said he, endeavouring to thrust with his knife:

“ next time you comes sturbin peaceable people, what’s ony musin themselves, be special keerful not to run your head agin Uncle Sip, cos him not to be trifled wid.” Each of these ejaculations was accompanied by a thrust of the knife ; the last of which was apparently fatal, for, with a faint cry, the Indian fell heavily upon the ground.

“ I’ve had many a tough fight,” said Adherbal, at their elbow, “ but I reckon I never met with so oncomfortable strong a fellow as yon Ingen, and I don’t want to agin.” As he spoke, he shook himself like a wet dog to put all to rights, and then took up his gun. “ How many are killed ?” said he, looking round. “ Three — one has got off, so we might as well not have chased them, for he’ll carry the news as well as all could have done.” He walked to the Indian with whom he had just been engaged, and placing his foot on his body, “ Mr. Pawnee,” said he, “ if we was lying where you is, you would be for scalping

us. Now that's a thing agin our creed. So, you see there's something gained by now and then falling in with Christians.—I say, Sip," said he, turning to the negro, "if your master was here, what a thumping lie he'd tell about this piece of work !"

"Mas John nebber lie," replied Sip sulkily.

"*Never* lies ! Why, he does nothing else."

"No sich ting : Mas John : only zaggerate."

"Zaggerate ! what's that ?" demanded Adherbal, evidently a little puzzled : "I an't well edicated."

"Shoare I don' know," replied Sip ; "only I'm sartin it nebber mean lie. De way I comed to know um was cos Maj Harble at de gar'son say, Mas John monstrous clebber ; only he'm a bad way o' zaggeratin, when he tell'd a story."

"Well, Sip," said Adherbal after a moment's thought, "I reckon it don't range far from a lie."

"I don't reckon no sich ting, Mas Herbal :

you'm for ebber recknin and 'spectin, but you'm nebber right."

"Well, well, we won't quarrel about it, *You* may say your master *zaggerates*, which I don't know the meaning of; and I'll say he *lies*, which I do know the meaning of."

The negro made no reply, other than a sulky shake of the head, and commenced loading his rifle. This finished, he cast a look at the bodies, as they lay dotted by spots of moonlight breaking through the trees, and left them to stiffen, or become the prey of wolves, as either might chance to happen. Adherbal and Rifton followed close at his heels.

Herrick lingered a few moments by the scene of conflict. He was in the act of turning to follow them, when his attention was attracted by the Indian who had been the opponent of Sip; slowly and cautiously the savage raised his head and looked round. Herrick was screened behind a bush and es-

caped observation. The receding footsteps of the others were heard at a distance. From his prostrate attitude, the Indian raised himself to his knee, and once more gazed about him. Another and apparently a struggling effort brought him to his feet. He was faint from loss of blood, and reeled unsteadily in his attempt to keep his feet. In a moment after, he staggered off, and was lost in the darkness.

Herrick watched him until his dim form had vanished. He made no attempt to interrupt him, but permitted him to avail himself of the only chance of life yet left—that of reaching his friends, being certain that his wounds would incapacitate him from further acts of hostility against the party.

Leaving the spot, he overtook the others, and reached the camp without molestation.

CHAPTER XVII.

Where friendly swords were drawn, and banners flew,
Ah! who could deem that foot of Indian crew
Was near?—Yet there, with lust of murd'rous deeds,
Gleam'd like a basilisk, from woods in view,
The ambush'd foeman's eye.

CAMPBELL.

THE Indians who had taken Mr. Wilford and his daughter prisoners were attached to the party of Pawnees then haunting the skirts of the Nemahaw. Their course was accordingly directed to the forest of that river. Little time was allowed for rest, and less for food. They passed swiftly through a region of country known to be hostile; their own number being too few to cope with a war-party, and

their prize sufficient to prevent any inclination to risk the loss of it by an encounter with any of the savage warriors of that neighbourhood. They reached the forest on the same night with the Rangers, though later. The Hawk Chief avoided the camp of his own party, for he feared that the sight of his captives might excite the fierce feelings of the warriors—feelings only allayed by blood; and their death would be in direct opposition to his own schemes. He knew too that the tenure of his authority over his followers was too frail to withstand the tumultuous gush of their fury, when that fury was directed against a captive enemy.

The spot where they halted was on a dark glade. Massive trees reared themselves like pillars of black marble in every direction. The size and grandeur of their trunks showed the length of time they had lived upon that spot; and enormous relics of the decayed growth that had preceded them were rotting

in every direction around, telling a tale of ruin, in which Time had been their only enemy.

Immediately upon stopping, several Indians set out to collect fuel. The Hawk Chief, with more delicacy than could have been expected, employed himself in constructing a hut of boughs to shelter his fair prisoner from the damp of the night. In the mean time, Tarahasse seated himself on the ground, and having selected a piece of dry wood, laid it in front of him, and placing the end of a small stick of a harder kind upon it in a vertical position, commenced twirling it in his hands for the purpose of producing fire by the friction. A small cavity was almost instantly worn in the soft wood. Into this the Indian threw a few grains of dry sand, scraped from the earth at his side. He then placed the upright stick between the palms of his hands, with the end in the cavity, and commenced twirling it backwards and forwards with great rapidity. A slight smoke soon oozed from the dead wood, and in a

minute sparks of fire followed. He then laid aside the stick, applied a few dry leaves to the sparks, and by the assistance of his breath a light blaze soon burst out.

In the mean time, others had brought huge piles of fuel, and a large fire was soon crackling through the grove, illuming the trees and bushes.

This completed, the wild group shared a scanty meal with their prisoners; then wrapped their robes about them, and stretched themselves with their feet toward the fire.

The Hawk Chief alone remained, leaning against a tree, with the light strongly reflecting upon him. There was something in his wild appearance and the glaring colours of his war-paint that gave to him an air almost demoniac; yet it was of demoniac beauty — fearful, but grand. He might well have been a forest king — such as forest kings of America were long before a European dreamed that other lands than his own were sleeping on the bosom of the broad ocean—when America was a land

unknown in history or fable—when numerous people, free in body and soul, were rising to might, and passing to decay, within its vast recesses, leaving behind them monuments that have outlived tradition, and have nothing to tell their history save their own gigantic ruins.

For some time the Indian moved not from his attitude. His eyes were riveted on the features of his fair prisoner, who from sheer exhaustion was sleeping on her father's bosom, with that happy forgetfulness of trouble which was a peculiar characteristic of her almost infantine nature.

The stern savage was moved to admiration. Never before had he seen a white maiden. He stood as one entranced. His dark eye was at one moment fixed upon her face, the next it wandered to her slight form. But even as he gazed, the appearance of admiration passed away. He half raised himself, his eye lighted up, and for a moment his hand rested on the handle of his tomahawk. The movement, how-

ever, was momentary, for the hand was almost instantly withdrawn, and sinking against the tree, he remained in the same fixed attitude, with his eyes resting upon the countenance of his captive.

Suddenly a faint sound, like a distant voice, came floating through the night air. It was unobserved by the sleeping Indians. It, however, reached the ear of Mr. Wilford. Tarahasse, too, slowly raised himself and listened. The tree, however, against which the Hawk Chief had leaned was deserted; nor was the warrior to be seen. He had departed the moment the noise reached him, and was threading the woods in the direction of the sound. With swift and bold speed he pursued his course, until the light of several fires was seen glimmering through the trees, and a sound was heard of voices engaged in conversation. Then, with all the instinctive craft of his people, he crouched to the ground, and dragged his limbs after him with a slow and stealthy motion. As

he drew near, his caution increased. He scarcely turned a leaf. In a few minutes he could obtain a full view of the party.

About thirty men, armed with cutlass and yager, composed the force. They were the band of Rangers from Wolf Hill. Near them, in the bushes, lay the body of an Indian. In the centre of the group sat several men engaged in conversation.

The wary savage scanned them at a glance. He recognized the hardy features of Norton, who was known to most of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the bluffs. He knew too that the party must be upon some errand of hostility; for nothing except articles of utter necessity were strewed around. He saw too that several were examining the locks of their yagers, as if there were a probability of occasion for their services.

At a distance, staked among the wild peavines, were the horses.

All this was marked with intuitive quick-

ness. Not an individual escaped his notice. He judged from their fresh appearance that they had but recently left the garrison, and that their journey, whatever might be its destination, was still unaccomplished ; though what might be its object he could not divine. Even in the short time that he stood with his eye roving from group to group, he had laid a plan for the destruction of the whole. He listened to their conversation, in the hopes of hearing something that might be intelligible, and with a keen eye scrutinized the features of every speaker : not a gesture escaped him.

Finding, however, that there was little to be learned, he withdrew for the purpose of executing his plan. Crouching among the bushes, he pursued a devious path, so as to take advantage of the deepest gloom. At a more secure distance he again stopped to reconnoitre. His look dwelt long and troubled upon the bronzed features of the woodsmen. It was evident that from them he expected

the most resistance. Nor was his eye less anxious as he fixed it upon Herrick. There was an expression of fearless intrepidity about him that did not escape the keen-sighted savage; for every Indian is a physiognomist. From his countenance his eye wandered to his figure, and from that to his arms; nor did the butt of a pistol deposited in his bosom, nor a strong bright cutlass lying bare across his knees, escape him.

Shrinking once more amid the darkness of the bushes, he continued his cautious course to where the horses were secured. He passed from horse to horse, occasionally giving vent to a low and almost inarticulate expression of pleasure as he came across one that peculiarly pleased him. He felt the limbs of many with an air of experience, and came to conclusions respecting them that would have done credit to any jockey; for in horses every Indian is a connoisseur.

At last he came to a noble black, of power-

ful make, yet with limbs as finely formed as those of a deer. A low murmur of satisfaction escaped him as he laid his hand upon the back of the tethered animal. The instant, however, that the brute felt him, as if instinct had told the touch to be that of an enemy, he snorted loudly, rearing and plunging among the dead brushwood, and causing a crashing noise that reached the Rangers. The Indian shrunk back. The heavy step of a soldier broke through the bushes towards the spot. He stopped by the very animal that had caused the noise, which submitted passively to his caresses. After patting him, the Ranger passed from one to the other, giving each a cursory examination. Having ascertained that none were missing, he retraced his steps and joined his comrades.

Scarcely was he seated, before Sharatack emerged from his hiding-place and approached the horse. This time, however, instead of going directly to the animal, he stole to the

cord which secured him to the stake. He drew his knife from its scabbard, and had already placed its edge against the rope, when he seemed to alter his purpose. Replacing it in the scabbard, he glided off in the darkness, taking a direction opposite that which led to Tarahasse and the prisoners.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

THE
HUNTERS OF THE PRAIRIE,
OR
THE HAWK CHIEF.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

THE
HUNTERS OF THE PRAIRIE,
OR
THE HAWK CHIEF.

A TALE OF THE INDIAN COUNTRY.

BY JOHN TREAT IRVING, JUN.

AUTHOR OF "INDIAN SKETCHES."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1837.

THE
HUNTERS OF THE PRAIRIE,
OR
THE HAWK CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

A trampling troop ; I see them come :
In one vast squadron they advance !
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride ;
But where are they the reins to guide ?
A thousand horse—and none to ride ?

Mazeppa.

Make ready for the charge !
They come !—they come !—On, brethren, to the field ;
The word is vengeance !

SOUTHEY.

It was about midnight. The excitement
which had attended the brush with the scout-

ing party of Indians had cooled. The soldiers were stern and watchful. The idea that they should escape scot free had entirely passed away ; but, notwithstanding this sense of peril, drowsiness was creeping over them. Norton had not been seen since the watch was first appointed. He had not been engaged in the skirmish, nor was he at his post. Vague surmises were offered as to his fate ; and more than one gloomy shake of the head announced fears of the worst, when they were startled by a cry near the horses.

“ Them Ingens are at the animals !” said Adherbal, starting up and cocking his rifle.

A number of Rangers sprang to their feet. At the same time fierce whoops rose from several quarters, echoed by a scream of terror from the horses, and a cloud of savage figures flitted among the underwood. One of them was stopped in full career by a bullet from Adherbal’s rifle. Then followed a crashing of bushes and stamping of hoofs. A loud

yell from the Indians drove the frightened horses to madness. They tore up their stakes, and ran with wild neighs one against another, while the Indians pressed on with whoops and cries. The horses grew furious. The woods rang with their wild neighs. They rushed together in a dense mass, and stood for a moment hesitating as to their course. Adherbal took advantage of the pause to shout—"They've rushed them. Let them that value their lives take to the trees."

In good time the advice was given and followed; for scarcely were the Rangers ensconced, before the herd came galloping on. Their course was like the rush of an avalanche. They leaped the prostrate trees. Their own neighs, and the yells of their pursuers, served to increase their fury, and the ground shook under them. They bore down on the encampment, and could be plainly seen in the light. Every eye blazed! The steaming breath smoked from their nostrils!

Every mane was erect ! Their long tails flaunted in the air, and the white foam frothed around their mouths. In a moment they plunged through the fire, and thousands of sparks flew upwards. In another instant the tent was trampled under foot. Just then Adherbal spoke in a loud clear tone—

“ Wait till the animals is past ; then give it to the Ingens.”

As the herd vanished, a cloud of savages followed in their wake, darting from tree to tree.

“ Pepper their hides !” cried the old man. A dozen yagers flashed, and their reports were answered by a single scream.

“ One Pawnee the less,” said he. “ Give them another taste.”

He had scarcely spoken, when a shower of arrows was discharged by the Indians, and one of the Rangers fell forward, pierced through the breast.

Till then Herrick had been inactive ; but

the fall of the Ranger roused him. He started from his post, and his voice rang like a trumpet through the stillness which followed the discharge. As he stepped out, Adherbal caught his arm.

“Keep cool, boy,” said he; “there’s nothing like calm in Ingen fights.”

His advice was unheeded, for Herrick burst from him, cutlass in hand, and sprang towards the enemy.

“Follow ! follow !” shouted he, waving his arm to the Rangers, who were advancing with Arden.

A cloud of arrows was discharged, and several pierced his clothes; still he kept on his course. An Indian sprang at him from behind a tree; but Herrick drew a pistol and shot him dead.

“Mighty cool,” said Rifton: “I’ve heard Norton speak of that young man. When his blood’s up, he’s a devil incarnate. They say, too, he bears a charmed life.”

“Is that the say?” cried Adherbal, who was not untinged with superstition. “I reckon it may be true, for I never seed a man go so clear of arrows.”

The Rangers obeyed the call of Herrick. Headed by Arden and Santon, they poured on. An arrow struck the latter in the head, and he fell dead, directly in front of the fire.

“On! on!” shouted Herrick; “avenge Santon!”

It needed not this cry to excite them. The young lieutenant was a favourite with all, and their execrations, as they rushed by his corpse, showed the fierce feelings excited by his fall. At that moment, a pile of dry fuel, collected to serve for the night, caught fire, and blazed up like a beacon-light, illumining the dark arches of the forest with a red ghastly glare. The situation of both parties was revealed. The bushes were teeming with dark warriors; and grim faces and glowing eyes were peering from behind each tree. In a mo-

ment the Rangers were among them, with their heavy cutlasses.

“That’s a mighty ridiculous way of fighting Ingens,” said Adherbal, who with about eight or ten hunters still kept to the trees. “There’s three good lives lost. Poor fellow!” said he, fixing his eye on Santon’s body. “He was no coward. He’ll never speak lightly of dying again.”

“Goy!” exclaimed Sip, at his side, raising his rifle to his cheek. “Dat dam feller goin to strike Mas Herrick ahind.” Crack! The discharge of his rifle concluded the sentence.

“A bad shot,” said Adherbal, as the Indian fell, wounded in the thigh. “You should have sent the bullet through his head, to put him out of misery at once. You see how he kicks. My maxim is, ‘Always fight merciful.’”

After a short contest, the Rangers burst through a copse of bushes that held an obstinate body of enemies, and pushed into the

very thick of them. The hunters, although too wary to mingle pell-mell in the fight, kept up a fire from their ensconcement, which long practice and great coolness rendered murderous. Though superior in numbers, the Indians were beginning to give ground, when a single whoop arose at some distance in the woods. It was but a solitary voice, but it was answered by a yell of exultation from the Indians. They rallied, and the new-comer, a young warrior, glaring with paint, dashed through the thicket, and grappled Herrick.

“That’s Sharatack, the Hawk Chief of the Pawnees,” said Adherbal. “If Mr. Ostrand’s charmed life ever stood him in stead, it is now.”

The contest between the two was hand to hand, foot to foot, breast to breast. It was a trial of strength and activity, for each had seized the armed hand of his opponent. Herrick soon found that in sinew his foe was his superior, but he shrank not from the struggle.

They pressed each other backward and forward, at one moment so closely clenched that their cheeks touched; the next, they held each other at the full stretch of arm. They writhed and panted. At length, Herrick stumbled, and fell, forcing the Indian with him to the ground. The savage attempted to rise, and half succeeded; but Herrick wreathed his arms around him, and had dragged him down, when a blow was aimed at his head by an Indian. A sudden motion caused it to miss and take partial effect upon the shoulder of Sharatack, whose struggles it weakened; and before it could be Repeated, the intruding savage was felled by a ranger's cutlass. During the scuffle, both antagonists had dropped their weapons, and grasped each other's throat till both were nearly senseless. While thus exhausted an Indian rushed forward and dragged the young Hawk Chief from the fray; another raised his tomahawk to make a blow at Herrick, but a

Ranger's weapon checked his arm. Thus frustrated, the savage turned furiously upon the new opponent. The Indian was a man of great strength. The Ranger was hurled to the ground, and in another instant had been fairly sped, had not a bullet stretched the savage in the dust.

“That's the way to send a ball,” said Adherbal, hastily reloading his rifle. “You see, Sip, I didn't trouble that fellow with any unnecessary pain. I tried dreadful hard to get a shot at the young Hawk while he and Herrick were tussling, but I couldn't, without winging Mr. Ostrand. I'm considerable afeard that Ingen's used him up.”

As he spoke, however, Herrick rose slowly from the earth. The crowd of Indians had grown so dense, that the Rangers were completely hemmed in. There was but little chance of escape, and they fought with the fury of despair.

“Monstrous bad! monstrous bad!” mut-

tered Adherbal, tightening his belt, and pulling at his knife, to set it free in the scabbard.

“I reckon we’ll have to charge among them. Send them your bullets, then spring out and give them your blades.

“Stop !” said a voice at his elbow.

“Ha ! Norton, see what a fix them Rangers have got into. They *would* charge ; and now they’m in a pretty scrape.”

“Where’s Herrick ?”

“Busy among them, if he isn’t killed. He’s as great a fool as all the rest.”

“Follow me, all !” said Norton, without replying : “make no noise.”

With swift caution they made a circuit through the forest and approached the fighting party, from the quarter opposite that in which they had formerly been stationed.

“Now !” said Norton, “give a hurrah and *rush* them.” Immediately the woods rang to their loud cheer.

“Forward ! forward !” shouted he. “Hold

your fire till within six paces, then give them lead, and take good aim."

The Rangers were equally surprised with the Indians at this reinforcement. A loud shout of joy answered the huzza. A faint yell of defiance burst from the savages, but was cut short by the discharge of rifles, which levelled each a man.

"Club your guns, and close," shouted Adherbal. Upon this charge most of the Indians fled; but a few were arrested by the trumpet whoop of Sharatack, who reappeared and took his station foremost in the fight.

"I thought Herrick had settled that Ingen," muttered Adherbal. "They'll fight like devils while that young Hawk heads them. I think I'll step out in the bushes and load my rifle. It's prudent to settle him, without coming to close quarters. He fights wonderful."

Before he had time to reload his weapon the Indians disappeared. The Hawk Chief

tried to rally them in vain. In a few moments not a savage was in sight.

“’Tis useless to follow,” said Norton. “It would only be wasting men, whom we can ill spare.”

His advice was too prudent to be neglected, and Arden recalled his Rangers, who were starting in pursuit.

“What a devil of a fight I had with that chief!” said the Doctor, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

“Whe—w—!” whistled Adherbal.

“What the devil are you whistling about?” demanded the other angrily.

The old man made no answer, but turned to the negro. “Sip,” said he, “do you call that a *zaggeration*?”

“No! Mas Herbal, ’tan’t no sich ting. I seed Mas John fight ’um my own sef.”

“Did any one else?” demanded Adherbal, looking round.

“Shoare I did,” said Cuff, stepping up.

Adherbal was puzzled. He scratched his head. "How them niggers *will* back a lie!" said he: "howsomdever, nobody believes them, no more nor I—there's some comfort in that."

All further dissertation upon this delicate point was cut short by the movement of the troops. They collected their arms and retired to the camp.

CHAPTER II.

What thou hast to speak, say briefly,
And with little loss of words. Waste not time,
Betwixt the resolution and the deed. Mark me,
Walls have ears, and green trees have eyes :
Remember this—let your words be whispered,
And your doings cautious.

Old Play.

IN a few moments the band, bloody from the carnage, reached the fire. Arden cast an anxious eye towards them. The well-known faces of several sturdy fellows were missing. Norton came to him.

“ Mr. Arden,” said he, “ the morning must not find us here. An attempt at escape should

be made without delay : the darkness will favour it."

" But the wounded ! I see Wilson slinging his arm," replied Arden, pointing to a Ranger who had taken the handkerchief from his neck to support the bloody limb.

" They are few, and the wounds slight," replied Norton. " An Indian blow is either a scratch, or it speeds a life."

" I will look to the men," said Arden. He went among the troops, and returned. He found Norton and Adherbal in warm dialogue.

" You found their nest," said Adherbal, in continuation of the conversation.

" They are encamped about a mile down the bottom : at least thirty bush huts—not a squaw in company. To resist them is impossible."

" Totally so," replied the other ; " particular when we have to make use of hot-headed Rangers, who 're altogether onskilled in Ingen

tricks. We've lost several lives very unnecessary."

"Impetuosity is a good fault," said Arden.

"No fault is a good one," answered Adherbal; "and more particular in bush-fighting, petuosity is the worst. It was all your petuosity, Mr. Arden. You and Mr. Ostrand set them Rangers on. You know no more about skrimmaging with Ingens, than I do about singing psalms. I say nothing agin your courage; but had you only acted judgmatical, we might have used up them Ingens, without counting a single life less. Howsomdever, there's no use in wasting words about it now, but it makes one dreadful mad anyhow."

Arden answered sharply—"It is the part of an assassin to shoot down his foe from a lurking-place. A man meets him face to face."

"And acts like a fool in doing it," retorted Adherbal testily. "When an enemy shows fair play, I show it too. But when an Ingen

comes round me with his sly deviltry, I give him trick for trick. That's my doctrine."

Arden not wishing to bandy words with the testy old woodsman, whom contradiction only inflamed, calmly replied, "We'll say no more about that. Are you of Norton's opinion? must we be off?"

"If we stay, we get scalped," replied Adherbal: "if we go, there's a chance of slipping them. So I'm for going. Even old Sip can see the necessity of that."

"I think the plan altogether advisable," said Weazel, thrusting his cadaverous visage in the group: "that is," continued he, "if it can be done with safety; as I would propose nothing that would lead to bloodshed."

As he finished, Adherbal turned short round, and tucking his fists in his sides, fixed an angry eye on him. At last he spoke: "Who axed you to propose anything? Where the devil are you to get an idea from? I'll

tell you what it is, Mr. Weazel, or whatsomdever you call yourself, I always heerd you was a coward; but I did not suppose such a contemptible thing as you are was in existence. You haven't spunk enough for a woman."

To all attacks upon his valour, Weazen had but one set speech: "I was not cut out for a soldier," said he; "and if I lack courage, it is not my fault."

"He talks of being *cut out*, as if he was a pair of breeches," replied Adherbal. "Mr. Weazel, when the skrimmaging was hottest, and the Ingens were screaming and howling like so many devils, I seed you tucked in that hollow log. By the Lord! it made my blood *bile*! Then, when it's all over, you come with your *propysitions*! — Look ye," said he, shaking his heavy fist, "I'm getting mad! I don't want to demolish you totally; but I reckon if you arn't out of my sight in a minute,

I shall flurry some of your idees, if you've got any. I only give a hint, and you had better ax no questions."

Norton now interfered in behalf of the tailor. After some time he contrived to soothe the irritated feelings of the sturdy woodsman, and Weazen was permitted to remain, upon the express condition that he kept his opinions to himself.

"Your advice respecting a retreat shall be followed," said Arden. "Your opinion is doubtless valuable in an emergency like this."

"There's no doubt of that," replied Adherbal gravely. "Neither do I pretend to deny that my opinion is of as much *vally* as that of any one here, seeing that I have fo't agin Ingens, and have lived in woods, and on prairies, since I was a boy. When it consarns eddication, and sich like, I knock under to Norton, who was teached in the settlements; but when it comes to a bush-fight, I call no one my superior, not even an Ingen,

though it seems to come nat'el to them, while a white man must larn it by experience. Our skudding will be a risky piece of business anyhow ; but if we stay, them Pawnees will have daylight to show how few we are, and to help them aim their arrows. If we steal off, it's not onpossible we may shoot clear of them."

" True ! — Immediate preparation shall be made," said Arden, walking off.

" I don't like that man," said Adherbal, eyeing him as he retired. " He has a monstrous idee of himself. Yet he's brave.—But then," continued he, arguing to satisfy himself, for nobody listened to his remarks,—“ but then, his petuosity is of no vally ; for when you set about getting the better of an Ingen, some craft is required, as the Doctor says when he tells an oncommon stout lie."

" You'm always 'busin Mas John," interrupted Sip ; " and it's only cos he fotch more game den you. To-day he brung in seben

turkeys, and you nebber bring noffin but piece o' ole deer. Sho, Mas Herbal, I 'se 'shamed o' you. I can beat dat my own sef. Ole piece deer—sho—you talk !”

“Harkye! nigger,” exclaimed the other, “who ax'd you to put in your oar? Howsomdever, I cast no blame on you for striking a blow for your master when need comes, and I think more of you for it.”

Sip, apparently satisfied with this salvo, made no reply. Adherbal turned to Norton, and casting a contemptuous glance towards the troop, asked, “Why did Major Harville send them Rangers? Was it to have them butchered? You see what has been done already. Should we have another skrimmage, there will be a great gap in their numbers. An Ingen will fire twenty arrows before a Ranger can load his rifle; which makes the chances twenty to one.”

“It's too true,” replied Norton. “More men, however, could not be spared; so we

must make the most of what we have. If we baffle the Indians to-night, we can lay a long reach of ground between us before daylight."

"They are only waiting for breath," said Rifton. "Depend on it, some fellow is on the watch, to see that we do not get the start of them. If we push on in the dark, we must be ready for a bout."

"Of course! Here comes Mr. Arden." The young officer joined them, and it was determined to leave the place with all possible silence. Adherbal was appointed guide,—a duty for which his knowledge of the forest rendered him eminently qualified.

They stopped for a short time in order to scrape a hasty grave for the bodies of their fallen comrades, and covered them with bushes, for the purpose of concealing them from their foes.

With a stillness that almost gave them the appearance of so many spectres, they made their preparations, and in a short time the

words " All ready !" were the signal to the old guide.

" Keep clear of the bushes," said he, " and walk in Ingen file. Don't tread on the dry sticks, and be careful not to straggle into the moonlight. We must keep under cover for half an hour at least."

Adherbal gave the signal by moving on, and directed his course up the bottom, in an opposite direction to that taken by the Indians when beaten off.

CHAPTER III.

A band of yeomen broke forth from the glade, headed by Locksley and the jovial Friar, who taking an effectual part in the fray, soon disposed of the ruffians.

Ivanhoe.

To keep up the train of our narrative, we must return to Mr. Wilford and his daughter in their captivity.

Sadly and in silence, Mr. Wilford sat in front of the crumbling fire, surrounded by his wild captors. Every thing tended to increase the gloom of his feelings. There was a dreariness, a chilly stillness in the dark flat bottom they had selected for their camp. The moon could scarcely penetrate the dried foliage of

the vines that hung among the trees. The whippoorwill added his mournful voice; and occasionally the long howl of a wolf came floating through the woods like the wail of a troubled spirit.

There was something, too, in the fierce and malignant features of Tarahasse that made him shudder, and caused him to draw his sleeping daughter instinctively close to his bosom.

He had determined when in extremity to make a desperate resistance, and lay with his hand upon the hilt of a dagger concealed in his bosom. His fears on his daughter's account were for her life alone; for he well knew that, cruel as were the tribes of American Indians, still with them the honour of a female was never violated.

His heavy thoughts were disturbed by the awaking of the subject of them. She raised herself in cheerful forgetfulness, and flung her dark hair from her forehead. The conscious-

ness of their situation then forced itself upon her, and burying her face in her hands, she sobbed audibly.

“ Oh ! father,” said she at length, “ this is terrible—terrible ! I have slept, and have had dreams—happy dreams ; and to be awakened to such a fearful reality ! ”

“ Nay, Lucy, courage ! keep a good heart, and all may yet end well. You know I have great faith in dreams.”

He was interrupted by distant yells and the report of fire-arms. The Indians showed no surprise. Tarahasse, however, drew nearer to the captives, as if the sound rendered him less secure of them.

To Mr. Wilford this was a moment of intense anxiety. From the direction and the distance travelled, he had little doubt but that they were now upon the banks of the very river to which the Rangers had been despatched, and the discharge of the fire-arms convinced him that the troops were

now engaged with the Indians. "Should they prove victorious, they might scour the forest, and set him and his daughter free."

For some time the sound of conflict swelled loud in the night air. In half an hour, however, the whole had passed, and the woods were as quiet as ever.

"I fear the Rangers are worsted," said he, thinking aloud, rather than intending the remark for his daughter. "In that case, there is little hope for us."

Lucy had not the heart to answer this ill-boding prophecy. She only drew closer to him.

Some time had passed, when a noise was heard in the bushes, and Tarahasse suddenly sprang to his feet.

"Give the reptiles cold iron, if they resist," shouted a loud clear voice. "It would be risky to let off your fire-weapons. We have circumvented them fine. As I live! a white gal!"

At the first sound of voices the Indians sprang up. But a band of white men burst from the bushes. In front of them was Adherbal, rifle in hand, with his red cap pulled down to his eyes. Tarahasse was the first person opposed to him, and was instantly levelled by a blow of his fist :

Well planted, Adherbal," cried Herrick, who followed next : "you floored him scientifically."

"I'm not fond of striking Ingens with bare fists," replied the other ; "but in this case I considered it judgmatical. Knock them down, Rangers, but don't fire."

Resistance on the part of the Indians was useless. A dozen weapons were levelled at their breasts, as many were brandished over their heads, and before they could make use of their bows and arrows, each was confined in the gripe of several sinewy men.

"Bind them hand and foot," said Adherbal, "gag them, and lay them in the bushes."

“Better kill them,” said Arden, at his elbow.

“It is too bloody,” said Adherbal.

“I leave the matter with you,” returned the other : “dead men have close mouths.”

“When we’ve gagged them, they’ll be as quiet as dead men,” replied Adherbal.

“Take your own course.—Whom have we here ?” He had taken but a few steps, when he was arrested as by an apparition.

“Miss Wilford !”

“Mr. Arden ! my deliverer, God bless you ! God bless you !”

As she spoke, she sprang forward, and would have fallen, but the ready arm of the young soldier caught her.

“Lucy, dear Lucy ! are you hurt ?”

There was no answer. Her head fell on his shoulder, and her cheek rested against his.

“Bring water !” shouted he ; “she has fainted.” At the same time he threw a supporting arm around her waist.

“Why do you not go?” said he sternly to one who stood motionless in front of him.

The person addressed heeded him not, nor answered. Arden raised his head,—it was Herrick! His arms were folded, and his gaze was fixed upon the pale features of the fainting maid. The eyes of the rivals met; they became riveted on each other. Neither quailed. They stood as if each would have annihilated the other with his glance, or dived into the very secrets of his soul. It was such a look as conveys a tale too burning for lips to utter.

The unguarded words of Lucy had been heard by both. In Arden they revived almost perished hopes, and completely crushed what little had been left his rival.

The efforts of Arden were soon crowned with success. He felt the warm breath of his charge upon his cheek. He cast a hasty glance about him. Herrick had his back towards them. Mr. Wilford was bathing her

hands. No eye was upon him. His lips were pressed to hers. The next moment her eyes opened. She immediately extricated herself from his arms. "I thank you for your kindness, Mr. Arden," said she; "I have been troublesome, but you know I am not used to scenes like this."

"Miss Wilford knows too well that I am *always*—always happy to render any service to *her*," said Arden in a low tone.

"I thank Heaven you have revived, my dear girl," said Mr. Wilford, throwing his arm round her and drawing her to his breast.—"Ha !" exclaimed he, stepping forward, "Her-rick ! give me your hand. Why did you not call upon me when at the garrison ? Speak out, and defend yourself.—Here's Lucy, too ; you ought to have seen her, if but for an instant. I believe, though, she said you *did* call."

"I did—but—but I imagined her engaged."

With a strong effort he then mastered his

feelings, and asked a few questions respecting their captivity.

Half a dozen assembled round them, and numerous inquiries were made. Herrick withdrew from the group, and leaning against a tree, listened to the narration.

Lucy several times glanced towards him. With a feeling of mingled pique and sorrow, she perceived that he expressed no joy at her escape.

“Can it be,” thought she, “that he no longer loves me—that the lapse of a single year, has obliterated me from his memory?” So intently and sadly did she ponder this in her mind, that she several times disregarded or answered at random questions addressed to herself by the eager group, and the warm expressions of joy that escaped from Arden filled her almost with disgust.

Adherbal had been listening to the whole recital with great impatience, standing first upon one leg, then on the other. At length,

as Mr. Wilford was answering some interrogatory for the twentieth time, he broke in.

“ I reckon you can hear the story as well when we’re travelling as standing still. You should recollect that we’re not in the settlements, where we can talk over things at our leisure; and what’s more, there’s two hundred Pawnees in these woods, who are uncommon well acquainted with our whereabouts.”

These words recalled to them their situation, and after a short preparatory bustle, they were arranged for moving on.

Adherbal cast his eye towards the sky. “ The moon will soon be down,” said he: “ we will want its light to get out of this forest. I wish we could come upon them runaway horses, for without them our situation is uncomfortable. Bring out them Ingens,” said he to the Rangers, “ and lay them in our track, where they’ll be found in a day or so. It would be a pity to let them starve. There’s something dreadful disagreeable in starvation.”

The captives were accordingly brought forth by several of the Rangers.

“ There is one more,” said Norton : “ there were five.”

“ Ay !” said Adherbal, “ the big ugly fellow that I flattened.”

Immediate search was made ; but the other, who was Tarahasse, was not to be found. He had contrived to loosen the thongs that secured him, and during the confusion which followed the discovery of their prisoners, had escaped.

“ To pursue him were a loss of time and labour,” said Norton. “ He’ll slip through these bushes like a snake. His escape is dangerous to our safety. On ! without loss of time.”

“ Follow on my track,” said Adherbal ; “ that red reptile will bring the whole troop of Ingens on our heels. We will be lucky if some of us are not troubled with a splinter of ashwood, in the shape of an arrow. It’s monstrous annoying to have your body made

a quiver of.—“Mr. Arden,” said he, “from what I seed when you thought nobody was looking, I reckon you’d like to have an eye over that gal ; as I’m appointed to guide you, I also give my advice on that subject.”

Arden felt the blood rush over his face, and made a confused proffer of his services. Lucy cast a glance towards Herrick. A wish that he would offer rose in her mind, and was half murmured. He was looking in her face, but did not move.

Arden once more proffered his assistance. Reluctantly it was accepted. He threw his arm round her, to support her over the rough ground, and they moved forward.

With bitter feelings, and something like a muttered curse, Herrick followed.

CHAPTER IV.

What noise is this ?
God grant that nothing happen !

* * * * *

—This way—quick—quick !

Translated from Marie Tudor.

ON renewing their flight, Adherbal pressed on without hesitation. He threaded the different thickets, and struck across the open glades, with an air of confidence and self-possession that showed him to be fully aware of his present locality.

“ This piece of timber,” said he, turning to Norton, “ has been ransacked before ; the ground is as hard trod as a road. Howsomd-ever, that is a gain. Our track will puzzle a dull eye. It was hereabouts,” said he, look-

ing among the bushes “that I came upon the bones of an Ingen killed by a rifle bullet. I knowed it for—”

“Hush, Adherbal,” said Norton in a low voice; “the lady will hear you. I shot that Indian.”

“You! when?—but I’ll ax for particulars another time. I thought I knowed the mark on the bullet. I reckon, too, that you extarminated the fellow in the stream.”

“He also fell in fight with me,” replied Norton; “though, had not Herrick lent a hand, I should have come off second best.”

“In other words,” said Adherbal, “you would have lost the covering of your skull. Well! there’s something serious about a scalp. When you’m scalped once, you’m scalped for ever. It isn’t like losing your first teeth: a second crop follows them. But a scalp, once gone, never sprouts; though I’ve heerd of folks in the settlements, who are bald, and rub their heads with bear’s grease

to make the hair grow, for my part, I don't believe in it.—That boy, Herrick," said he, abruptly changing the conversation; "you know him? Who is he?"

"I do," replied Norton; "I know much concerning him that I cannot tell to another, —not even to you, Adherbal."

"Well, well," replied the other, "if it's a secret, you 'm bound to keep a close mouth."

"This leads to the river," said Norton, pointing down a glade. "Beyond is the open prairie: beyond that, a high peak."

"Do you remember that hill?" said Adherbal. "It was there you seed your first fight with Ingens; it was fought beautiful. Them 'Mahaws are game to the backbone; you may see their skeletons when we get clear of the timber."

"Herrick and I were hunted across the ridge two days since by a band of Pawnees," said Norton; "but as we were hotly pressed, we did not stop to examine the bones."

“ Hot pressed, was you? I haven’t heerd of that. I suppose that has something to do with the killing of them two Ingens.—Turn to the right,” said he, suddenly raising his voice so as to be heard by those behind, “ and keep close to me. I’m going to strike for yon thick cover, and you may lose sight of me. It would be well, too, to quicken your steps, so as to get through these dark spots as soon as convenient. Keep your wepons ready, Rangers !”

“ Is there danger ?” asked Lucy anxiously.

“ There’s no telling, lady,” replied Adherbal: “ dark bottoms and a hostile country always require a bright look-out, more particular when we know a troop of Redskins is on the watch for us.”

Lucy drew back apparently satisfied.

Adherbal, who had lagged while speaking to her, stepped to the side of Norton.

“ Norton,” said he in a low tone, “ we’re

tracked. Did you hear that howl down the bottom just before we turned ?”

“ My ear had been heavy had I not. I divined the meaning of your manoeuvre.—Ha ! there it is again. Its faintness will prevent its being noticed by the Rangers. Their ears are not practised to these sounds.”

“ I hope not,” replied Adherbal. “ I don’t distrust them. Though they’m onskilled in bush-fighting, yet they’m too full of fire to tremble at the shout of any Pawnee that ever breathed. The gal worries me ; she might faint, and that would be bothersome.”

While they spoke, however, their plans of secrecy were nearly defeated by a person entirely overlooked.

Sip brushed up till within a few feet of them.

“ Mas Herbal,” said he in a loud voice, “ dem Pawnees am arter us : I heerd um *holler*.”

“ Sip, you’m a fool !” replied the old guide quickly. “ I heerd it myself. ’Twas the howl of a wolf !”

“ No, no, Mas Herbal,” answered Sip with great earnestness. “ Wolf nebber howl dat howl. Him cum from troat ob a In-gen.”

“ Harkye, Sip,” replied the other. “ Do you think I have lived in the woods until my hair has growed grey, without knowing the howl of a wolf ?”

“ Nay, Adherbal,” said Lucy, “ listen to him : he may be right !”

“ Goy ! Mas Herbal, heerd um agin.”

“ So did I ; ’twas a wolf.”

Then drawing the negro forward a step or two, he said in a low tone, “ I know it was a Pawnee war-cry ; but would you frighten the gal into fits ?” He then added loudly, “ They’m wolves fighting over the provisions we left behind.”

“ Vey well, Mas Herbal. I tink um was a wolf at fust; but den I tink I’d ax. Dat beats Mas John’s zaggeration,” said he in a low tone. “ Humph !”

“ Drop astarn ! and don’t mistake the howl of a wolf for the whoop of a Pawnee.”

“ Nebber fear ole Sip,” was the answer of the other, as he fell back to his allotted place.

“ I forgot that old bear of the woods,” said Norton. “ He will tell at a time like this. He’s staunch as iron, and quick-sighted and open-eared as an Indian. He’s a capital rear-guard. Not a Pawnee will steal on us without warning.”

“ I’ve heerd that he was a prisoner among the Sioux for thirteen years, when quite a younker. His brother was killed by a Pawnee arrow. I was on the trail when he came on the body. I never seed a growed man go on so. First he cried like a child; then he

kneeled beside the dead body, and swore never to spare a Pawnee that he met in battle. He has kept his word."

" 'Tis a bloody oath," replied Norton: "such a vow is better broken than kept."

"I will not gainsay your words; but it's a fearful thing to see your only kin lying before you, slayed and scalped by a Redskin. I seed Sip when he swore, and I thought it right enough then. A nigger is but flesh, though perhaps of a worser kind than a white man, and therefore less able to stand firm agin temptation. I look upon revenge as but nat'ral; blood for blood is my maxim. The Ingens too have an instinct for giving as good as they get!—and instinct always ranges close to right."

" 'Tis lucky," replied Norton, "that your practice is more merciful than your creed. I've seen you spare many a fallen enemy."

"Creed and practice is two very different

things," said the other. "I look upon it, that every man who keeps to his craft, and shows fair play in his dealings, has struck upon a broad trail, which will bring him right in the end. Hunting animals and fighting Ingens is my craft; and if I never shoot a deer asleep, or strike an Ingen when he's wounded, I look upon myself as a man whose actions will stand scrutiny.—I don't like the silence of them Pawnees," said he abruptly: "they'm busiest when they'm stillest. They'm done screeching; so I think they're on our track. Howsomdever, it's tough to chase a trail in the night, particular in timber.—Sip," continued he, raising his voice, "keep your eye busy; look out for wolves."

"Ay, ay, Mas Herbal," answered the negro; "no mistake in ole Sip—albays wide awake."

Scarcely, however, had he uttered his answer, when a distant though distinct cry sounded through the forest.

“ Goy ! Mas Herbal, dat wolf guv loud howl. He'm cummin mighty fast.”

“ I heerd him, Sip.”

“ Well, I declare,” said Weazen, advancing, “ I may be mistaken, but really I *do* think that sounded very like the yell of Indians.”

“ You do, do you ?” said Adherbal surlily : “ well, then, you'm no judge.”

At this rebuff Weazen shrunk back, and Adherbal proceeded, muttering the words : “ tailor, cabbage, Ingens, and coward.” This lasted but a moment, for his anger, though hasty, was of short duration ; and with all his roughness, there was a kindness of heart about him, which could scarcely have been expected from his iron exterior.

“ I hate to snub the reptile in such a way,” said he to Norton ; “ but if I didn't put a stopper on his mouth, he 'd breed mischief.”

“ It was necessary,” was the laconic answer.

The conversation dropped, and they direct-

ed their course through the woods along the margin of the river, almost in the very path which Norton and Herrick had pursued during their former flight. For nearly half an hour they kept on in silence, unless when an occasional direction was given by Adherbal as he changed his course, or pointed out the tracks of persons who had crossed the ground before them. Since the yell which had drawn forth the remark of Weazen, none had been heard. The deepest silence reigned in the woods, broken only by the tramp of the soldiery, or the occasional cry of some night-bird. This continued until they reached the brink of the water, where a number of projecting ledges of rock enabled them by a little care in stepping from one to the other to reach the opposite bank.

“Rocks take no track,” said Adherbal, as the last person crossed. “That spot will bother them a little. I wish there was more like it. I’ve had twenty Ingens after me at once,

and have slipped them all by hitting upon a rock like this. But then I was alone, and of course left but one foot-print.—Yonder is the parara,” said he, pointing to the black waste, which now opened before them. There’s a full moon shining which will make our crossing a risky operation. It’s almost as bright as day. But still them Pawnees may be so far behind, that we may circumvent yonder hill, and get it betwixt us and them. It’s our best course; and when every path is dangersome, there’s nothing left but to hit upon the one which looks brightest at the eend.—Are you for it, Mr. Arden?” said he, turning to the officer: “you’m master here.”

“I trust to your guidance,” replied the other: “select the route you think best.”

“Well, then, here’s for yonder hill. Travel fast, and remember this,—*we are chased already*;—them cries down in the bottom was not wolf howls, but *Pawnee* war-whoops!”

CHAPTER V.

The midnight wind is on the heath,
And the midnight meteors dimly blaze !
The spectre with his bloody hand
Is wandering through the wild woodland ;
The owl and the raven are mute for dread,
And the time is meet to awake the dead !

* * * * *

Strange murmurs fill my tingling ears,
Bristles my hair—my sinews quake,
At the dread voice of other years—
When targets clash'd and bugles rung,
And blades round warriors' heads were flung.

SCOTT.

THE last words of warning that dropped from the old guide were not lost. All were now fully aware of the risk of their situation. All were silent.

The crush of the burnt stubble beneath the tread of the troops could be heard. The high peak shot up its conical head in front of them, a deep jet against the grey of the sky. The skeletons of those who had met their fate upon that spot were distinct to the eye, shining with phosphoric brightness beneath the moon-rays. It was a lesson from the dead to those around; a lesson such as death alone could give. They thought of the time when those mouldering forms had been clothed with flesh — when those motionless bones had been active with life. They thought of the battle, the war-whoop, the death-cry, and the dead! There were foes in pursuit of them fierce and relentless; and in an hour they might be lifeless, and lying with those whose bones were bleaching with the exposure of years. These thoughts were contained in the silence which followed the ominous words of the old guide.

They directed their flight towards the peak.

It was necessary to wind their course around it, to gain the shelter of some hollows at its base. They felt that they had all at risk ; that no skill, no prudence, no cool calculating forethought could avail them now : chance, chance alone could be their friend.

Arden, drawing his charge close to his side, with that instinctive feeling that teaches us to press to our bosoms those we love and are fearful of losing, hurried a few steps on, until they were by the side of Adherbal. They felt a kind of comfort in the companionship of this veteran of the woods ; for in him were centred all their hopes of escape, and on his skill and experience depended their existence. It is with much the same feeling that the landsman who has ventured on the deep waters, in the hour of the tempest creeps to the side of some battered son of the sea, and endeavours to derive hope by reading his bronzed features.

The face of the old man was calm—there

were no signs of trepidation. He had been for ever like a hunted fox, and was most in his element when most in peril. Lucy studied earnestly his mahogany features, exposed to the light of the moon. "Adherbal," said she, laying her hand on his arm. The old man started as if electrified. "What caused you to start?" asked she, surprised at this display of emotion in one so habitually under self-control.

"Lady!" said he in a low tone, "I was thinking of the dead. I was thinking of the time when I seed them skeletons alive; with their quivers at their backs, and their tomahawks in their hands. It is many long years ago. I have growed grey since. Do you believe," said he, drawing closer to her, and almost whispering in her ear—"Do you believe that when a man is once dead, he can come upon 'arth again?"

"No, Adherbal," replied Lucy: "a human being when once like those before us, is gone

for ever. There is a barrier between him and this world that can never be repassed. He has left his former haunts to return to them no more. His time is merged into eternity."

There was something thrilling in these few solemn words, proceeding from the lips of one so young, at such a time, and in such a place. The old man mused for a moment. "I thought so once—I thought so once; but I don't think so now. *I have seed the dead alive! I have seed them move; I have heerd them speak!—The dead, these very dead around you! You shall hear it, lady, for I shall be easier if I tell it.*"

As he spoke, he cast a superstitious eye towards the high hill and its ghastly occupants. At the same time, his fear of spiritual enemies did not prevent his throwing a wary glance towards the thicket behind, to see that no danger threatened from beings of earthly mould.

“ It was about five years after the battle which laid them bones where you see them, that I left the settlements for the trading post on the Missouri. It was the very night on which the battle had been fought five years before, that I stopped in that patch of timber. I was considerable fatigued; so I struck a light, kindled a fire, and after seeing the last of a piece of dried bear’s flesh, I rolled myself in my blanket and went to sleep. About midnight, I opened my eyes. It was a night like this. The moon and stars were all shining. I sot up. I heerd a howl in the parara, and I seed a deer scud across the battle-ground, and the howl came from a gang of wolves in chase. They scampered among the bones and disappeared over the top of the hill. I then looked upon those who were lying there. I thought how they had been when I first seed them: I thought how different that parara now was—how still it was to what it had been on the evening of the fight. I looked and

looked, till I began to shudder. I thought I could hear groans; I thought I could hear war-whoops: still I looked on. I was certain I heerd a groan! No! it was the creaking of the trees. I heerd a yell! but it was only the howl of a wolf. But suddenly I heerd one single shout, such as you may hear in battle, but far more loud, and shrill and fierce. It sounded like a trumpet in the stillness. It came from the top of the hill. The wolves howled through the woods, and the next instant I could see them flying across the parara. The turkeys flew from their roosts and rushed down the bottom; the owls dashed screaming from the trees: birds and beasts all fled from the spot, and I was left alone with the dead. Again I heerd that wild scream, and it made my blood curdle. A third time it was shouted. Then, lady! I seed them skeletons move: I seed them rise up and walk: I seed them stand as they did when they first fought, every man grasping his knife and shaking his tqma-

hawk: I seed them draw off, and heerd the war-whoop again, as they joined in battle. I could hear the weapons strike, and the warriors pant, and yell and scream. They fought it round and round the hill, and up and down the sides. All, all fought, except a single one upon the top. He stirred not from his stand. The others were as men, but he was as a skeleton. He fought not, he moved not, except when he waved his bony arm, as if in triumph, and sent up that long fierce shout that had called the dead from their homes to fight over their battles. I seed them fight until every 'Mahaw was slain but one; and he made for the timber where I was.—I could stand it no longer. I clutched my rifle and fled down the bottom. I shivered from head to foot. I could feel long streaks of cold shoot down my back, my teeth chattered, and my head shook on my shoulders. I was afeard to look behind me; but every moment I expect-

ed to feel a hand upon my shoulder. I have fought with Ingens from boyhood—I have been tied to the stake—I have smelt death; but I was never afeard till then—I was never afeard of any spot but this, and I'm afeard of no war-cry but that of the dead."

"You had been dreaming," said Lucy, half thrilled at the vehemence of the narrative. "Nothing but the brain of a dreamer could conjure up such a scene."

"Do you think so?" said the old man, with a kind of wishful expression in his eye. "I wish I did: but when I waked up, I was not in the spot where I laid down. I waked from a kind of trance; and when I looked around me, I seed nothing that I knowed. I was a mile from my night's camping ground."

"Have you never heard of people walking in their sleep?"

"As to that," replied Adherbal, "I have heerd that I was given to that at the time I

was a boy ; and if I could demonstrify to my own satisfaction that all that fight was a dream, I should feel oncommon comfortable.”

“ There is little doubt of it,” replied Lucy.

“ Well, I won’t argufy the matter now. We have no time to waste in words, and we shall want our breath.—Did you hear that yell? It came from the Pawnees in chase. They’m close upon us.”

“ Had we not better quicken our speed?” said Arden anxiously. At the same time several Rangers pressed forward, eager to hear what their guide would suggest.

“ It will be a waste of wind,” replied the other coolly : “ it must come to a fight ; and if you are of my opinion, we will strike for yon mount, and there make a stand. It’s a strong position, from which we might fight desperate. It will be the second I have seed on the same ground.”

“ Is there no forest—no better shelter than this bleak hill?”

“None! — the timber I wanted to reach is two miles to the west, and the cut-throats will be upon us before we could gain it.”

“Why not return to that we have just left?”

“They would meet us half way!”

“Then why not push on, and baffle them in the darkness?”

“They would overtake us, and shoot us down in the hollows of the parara.”

“Perdition!” exclaimed Arden bitterly. “So much for trusting in your guidance.— Why did you lead us from where we might have made a good defence, to this barren prairie?”

“Boy!” said the old man in a stern voice, “I have lived on the pararas from childhood—I have fought at different times with every tribe of Ingens, from the mouth of the Yellow Stone down to the Red River. I have seed Death, have almost had him by the hand, boy! and then I felt how sweet life was, how

much I loved it. Think you I would throw away that life? — think you I would expose it heedless? No! What I did was for the best; what I now advise is for the best. I can't stomach reproaches not deserved."

Arden made no reply. He saw that Adherbal was not to be cowed by angry words, and he cared not to sink his own dignity, in the eyes of his raw and half-brained followers, by engaging in a dispute with one who acknowledged no superior.

A contemptuous exclamation was the only answer he returned to the reply.

Norton, however, now spoke. "Adherbal," said he, "we must to the hill, of course. Its steep sides render it as advantageous a post as we can find in open country, though not equal to the timber. Yet," continued he, turning to Arden, "Adherbal has acted wisely. Had the Pawnees overtaken us in the woods, they must in the end have driven us from them. Adherbal endeavoured to

cross the prairie, and reach the thickets of the Konza branches. It was a sound plan, and the best that could have been devised. If it has failed, it is not his fault."

"Of course not," said Adherbal, who had listened with an appearance of vast satisfaction.

"Is there any prospect of eventual escape?" demanded Arden, without heeding the remark of Norton.

"That depends on circumstances," replied Adherbal. "If we flog them, there is; if they flog us, which ought not to be, they will probably deal a little rigoursome with the prisoners."

"How! what will be their fate?"

"A stake; or, if they take it in their heads to be merciful, an arrow and a scalping-knife."

Arden walked close to him, and said in a whisper, "The young lady, Miss Wilford, must she share this fate?"

“ Better the last than the first,” answered the other. “ I have taken a liking to her, for I never seed any thing so beautiful. I am an old man, and my time will soon be out ; but, much as I like the flowery pararas and the green woods of this world, I would risk my body to the arrows, and my head to the scalping-knife, to know that gal was safe in the settlements. She always speaks kind ;— then her voice is so soft ! It reminds me of the time when I was a boy, when I had a mother ; but that is long, long ago. This gal, too, is considerable more better-looking than her,—my mother looked more like me— she is dead now. Ten years have gone by since—I often think of her—I used to send her a stock of venison hams every autumn, to last through the winter ; and she always writ to say she had got them, and to thank me. My mother was a scholard. I always keep them letters in a piece of huckskin, in my shot-pouch, and sometimes, when I feel heavy, I

.

get Norton to read them to me. She's dead now. — 'There's the hill,' said he abruptly. "It's steep, and the moon has gone down, so that we'll have no light to climb by."

These were the only words uttered preparatory to the task of ascending. The lower part, though steep, was smooth. Near the top, the rock was so regular, that it almost resembled a wall built round the summit. Here the ascent was nearly perpendicular, rendering it a work of labour to surmount. This accomplished, the party found themselves upon a plot of ground about a quarter of an acre in extent, perfectly level, and possessing no other defence than its own natural rocky battlement.

Arrangements were soon completed. Miss Wilford was placed in the centre of the mount, where she would be more secure from the arrows of their enemies. The Rangers and hunters were stationed along the brink, crouching to present a smaller mark.

Lucy could not see beneath the brow of the hill; and to her, therefore, the moments had intense anxiety. Her eye searched for her father. She could hear his voice, and even discern his form amid the gloom. There was yet another; but she could not distinguish him.

“ Could I but see him for a moment *now*,” said she aloud,—“ but for one moment !—But then,” continued she, “ what could *I* say ? *He* has said *nothing*. He has shunned me — slighted me, and all—all without a cause. Herrick, I did not expect this.”

“ Not without a cause !” said a low voice near her,—“ not without a cause !”

Lucy started. “ A listener ! Mr. Ostrand, you have selected an honourable employment !”

“ Lucy, I will not defend myself against a charge which you know to be unjust. I heard but your last words. I came here but for a moment, to speak but a single word before

the Indians attack us. I thought that two who had known each other so long,—a week ago I would have said, so well,—should at least on such an occasion have parted with one kind word. I had something to say—it is no matter now. Be assured, Miss Wilford, that while I live, you have one who will do his best to secure your safety.”

He turned on his heel: Lucy half rose to stop him, but drew hesitatingly back. The next moment was too late. The sound of his footsteps died away, and with a heavy heart she saw him take his station at the brink of the hill.

“It is always thus! it is always thus!” said she: “when I would meet him frankly and kindly, by some cutting expression I chill him, and throw his warm feelings back upon him. How ungenerous! how ungrateful!”

Her melancholy meditations were cut short by the voice of Sip.

“Look out, Mas Norton,” said he in a

low voice. "I cotch glimpse o' sumfin movin; but de parara so bressed dark, I can't see per-ticklar well. Goy! he'm dare!"

"As I am a living man," said Adherbal, "I seed heads squinting over the edge of you swell. Keep your eyes busy, boys. You'm going to fight for your scalps; and," added he aside, "you'm like to lose them too.—Her-rick, is there anything moving along that slope? Quick! quick! do you see it?"

"No; I see nothing."

"Perhaps Sip can. — Sip," said he, raising his voice, "what's that in the hollow to the left?"

"Goy! Mas Herbal," said the negro, after a moment's anxious observation, "it be a whull nest on 'em. Dey'm tryin to sneak up."

"They are following the trail, ignorant how near they are to the hornet's nest!" said Norton: "they will suspect something, however, when the track runs upwards. They have wit enough to know that runaways do

not top a hill when there is a path on each side."

"Let them come," said Arden sternly ;
"they will find bullets ready."

"If I was axed," said Adherbal, "I would considerable rather they should stay where they are. They can give a dozen arrows to one bullet ; and I like their company so little, that I would be the last to cry out ; 'Here we are !'"

"You treat the matter lightly," replied the other.

"My conscience is light, young man ; why should I shudder ? I've wronged no man, not even an enemy ; I even give a deer fair play. —Are the men ready, Mr. Arden ?"

"Yes, they are to hold their fire until the Indians are within half pistol-shot : then their balls will tell."

"You'm right. 'Twas a judgmatical order ; but if the Ingens spy our station, they'll scarcely venture up, in the teeth of the fire

wepons. Them Pawnees have a mortal aversion to bullets. If they come on without knowing that we're here, we'll have a sort of upper grip, that will be mighty advantageous. There's nothing like firing on a party on-awars, even Ingens: it always discomposes them dreadful."

There was no reply to this remark. Their attention was fixed upon the approaching foes. A stern hush rested upon the whole party. A few raised themselves to get a fairer view. The Indians came on steadily, until the trail began to ascend. They then seemed to collect in a mass. They, however, were so well shrouded by the darkness, that nothing could be ascertained for certain. They began to move slowly: they crouched and skulked from one fragment of rock to another, as if aware of their proximity to an enemy. At times they stopped, as if for the purpose of resting, or as if seized with sudden irresolution.

“ They have smelled us out, that ’s sartain,” said Adherbal ; “ but they act odd. An Indian can climb twenty hills like this without tiring, and isn’t apt to turn back when he comes as near a scalp as he now is. There’s deviltry afloat, depend on it.—Sip,” said he, “ run to the back of the hill, and throw an eye around. I have my doubts about these manœuvres : they’m onnat’ral.”

The negro left his post and glided across the level. Scarcely had he reached the verge of the steep, when a shout burst from him, followed by an oath and the crack of his rifle.

“ Lord ! Lord ! cuss de arrer ! tuck away half my ear !” cried he : “ dey’m a hundred, tick as hops.”

Finding themselves discovered, the savages no longer attempted concealment. They were in an instant at the top of the hill, and before the whites could reach the spot, sent up their war-whoop, and full twenty dusky figures sur-

mounted the rock. An instant more, and it was crowded.

“ Plug it into them !” shouted Adherbal, setting the example by discharging his own rifle and closing with his heavy knife. A loud scream caught his ear. “ My eyes ! there’s the gal !” Three leaps brought him to her side. An Indian had her by the hair, and his arm was raised to strike. Adherbal made a blow at his bare neck with such force and strength, that the blade cut completely through the bone, and the head fell from his shoulders.

“ I never made a cut like that before,” said he, raising Lucy on one arm.

Whilst he was speaking, Lucy was again seized, and half torn from him by another Indian. Adherbal maintained his grasp round her waist with one arm, and made a thrust with his knife. This was eluded by the active savage, who seized his wrist and at the same time made a blow at his head with a

club. By a sudden motion, Adherbal received it upon his shoulder. Before it could be repeated, Herrick sprang forward, pistol in hand, and shot the Indian through the head. It was Tarahasse, the most blood-thirsty of the Pawnee tribe.

“It’s lucky you came up,” said Adherbal: “that fellow had me awkward; this gal——”

“Give her to me,” said Herrick, half forcing her from his arms. “Lucy,” said he, drawing her to him, “I will remain with you to the last—save you, I cannot—I would do it, were it possible, even for him.”

“My father!” said Lucy; “save *him*, Adherbal!”

“I will do my best, lady—I will do my best. I see him yonder. Ha! a clever thump that!” said he, as the old man with a sudden blow sent an Indian toppling over the edge of the hill.

The fight was of short duration. Most of the Rangers fled panic-stricken. A number,

however, formed in a body, and kept up a retreating fight, until they reached the edge of the platform. They were forced over this, and slowly retreated across the hills. This was not done until the rest had been completely overpowered.

Suddenly Sip determined to make an effort to regain his liberty. He was in the gripe of two savages. Taking advantage of one of them turning his head, he exerted his giant strength, tore himself from their grasp—with a blow of his fist levelled one to the ground, vanished over the brow, down the hill-side, and, baffling all pursuit, overtook the distant band of fugitives.

CHAPTER VI.

What! ho! whom have we here?
Prisoners, so please you—outlaws—men
That wander the forest glades
And call no one master—
Who slay the king's deer,
And mayhap a man—an he oppose them.

SEVERAL days had elapsed since the disastrous events narrated in the last chapter, when the prisoners and their captors came in sight of the Pawnee town. They stood upon the top of a swell, in a wide prairie, where the inhabitants had carefully preserved the grass from communication with the flames, that had ravaged the rest of the country. The scene was one of much picturesque

beauty. It was a glowing and mild day, such as are seen in the month of November, and called the Indian summer. The sky was of a ruddy purple, and a soft dim haze was floating in the air, softening the distant landscape, like the indistinct imagery of a dream.

For a short time the Indians stood upon the mount, and contemplated the scene. The silver Platte was rolling amongst numberless islands that studded its bosom. The prairie too was teeming with life. Numbers of mules were scattered about, the produce of traffic or pillage from some more southern tribe of Indians, who had themselves gained them in barter, or won them in foray from the half-wild Spaniard of the Mexican border.

Droves of half-tamed horses were speeding over the hills in one direction. In another, they were slowly walking through the high grass. Others were standing in herds. Mounted horsemen were careering around at full

speed, as if to try the mettle of their steeds, and groups of Indians of both sexes were scattered over the plain.

At a far distance, a dim cloud of smoke rested in the air, pointing out the site of the Pawnee town. It was built in the open plain, though close to the edge of the river, at the base of a range of low bleak hills. But the want of shrubbery was compensated by the islands of the Platte, teeming with forests, and foliage now purpled by autumn.

Before long, a straggler caught sight of the new-comers, and in a few minutes was up to them. He was young, finely formed, and decorated with the coxcombry of that savage tribe. He was mounted on a fiery and clear-limbed roan, caparisoned after the Indian manner. A tug or halter of plaited buffalo-hide fastened about the neck of the animal, and brought in a running noose round his lower jaw, answered for the bridle, the slack of which was about twenty feet long, and

hung in a coil on the left arm of the horseman. He was seated in a rough saddle, constructed of wood and raw hide, with high pommel, after the Mexican or Spanish model, and broad stirrups of bone, attached to the saddle by strips of untanned hide.

In his right hand the rider held a spear, pointed with a long sword-blade, probably gained in skirmish with the whites. Many of his ornaments were the workmanship of white men, and the wearer had the air of one who, if he could not gain by stratagem, would not hesitate to employ violence to accomplish his ends. He rode directly to Sharatack. No greeting took place between them, and after casting a cool, incurious glance towards the prisoners, he galloped for the village.

The warriors, in the mean time, seated themselves in a circle, with the captives in the centre, apparently waiting the arrival of some messenger.

Presently a crowd of horsemen burst from

the town towards them. When within a hundred yards, they dismounted, and turning their horses loose, walked up. They glanced at the captives, and seated themselves round Sharatack, without remark. A pipe was lighted and passed round. Each warrior inhaled the smoke, and not until it had gone the round of the whole circle did they break silence. An Indian, whose age gave him pre-eminence, then commenced a series of inquiries.

“Sharatack has found an enemy,” said he, looking towards the whites.

“He has,” was the quiet answer.

“He has struck the pale face?”

The other gravely nodded.

“How many days’ journey from the Pawnee lodges?”

“Upon the waters of the Nemahaw,” replied the other.

“Sharatack has prisoners: — the pale faces are caught like the wolf, in a trap.”

“The pale faces are taken,” was the answer.

“Has Sharatack no scalps? Are the rest of the white men alive?”

The Hawk Chief made no other reply than pointing to a string of scalps. Among them were the bright curling locks which had graced the head of Santon. Hyena-like, the savages had ransacked his grave and torn off the trophy. The Indian calmly ran his fingers through them.

“The pale face,” said he, “has hair like a woman; he is a coward.”

The Hawk Chief looked steadily in the eyes of the speaker, then moved his arm slowly round the circle of grim savages. “Many warriors left the Pawnee village with Sharatack. They met the white men in battle; they are dead; the pale-faced warriors have slain them.”

The other cast a keen glance around; many

familiar faces were gone; his eye grew dark as it rested on the prisoners.

“Sharatack has spoken the truth. There will be death-songs in the Pawnee lodges. But there are prisoners! The Indian loves blood upon his grave. The pale faces shall die.”

“A dead warrior must have the blood of his enemy,” replied the Hawk Chief. “It is just. Let the pale faces die. Let those who have gone to the land of spirits hear their death-cry and be happy.”

A pause followed, during which the eye of the Indian rested on Lucy.

“Sharatack,” said he, “has brought a maiden of the pale faces to the village of the Pawnees. She will die with the white warriors.”

The Hawk Chief replied sternly, “The white maiden is the prisoner of Sharatack. He will spare her. The dead ask not the blood of women.”

The other bowed a grave assent to the impetuous answer. Then, according to the custom of the tribe, he formally invited the party to the town. This was the signal for breaking up the circle. In a few moments they were on their way.

During their captivity, an explanation had taken place between Herrick and Lucy. He no longer avoided her, but was as much as possible by her side, addressing to her words of consolation or encouragement ; and although a shade of deep trouble was upon his countenance, it was not of a gloomy character.

His words had great effect in keeping up the drooping spirits of Lucy. When he was by her side, those fears diminished which when alone made her heart sink ; for there was something so confident and cheering in his tones, that she hoped in the face of despair.

Arden, on the contrary, had grown re-

served. His disposition, naturally stern, had become morose, and at moments even savage. He kept aloof from the others, and whatever evils he suffered from his captivity, he attempted not to alleviate by the sympathy of those about him.

Upon entering the town, men, women, and children were waiting to unite their voices in the congratulations showered on the victorious chief, and to add their taunts to those already aimed at the prisoners. These were borne with great philosophy by all except Adherbal, who understood the language, and therefore felt their full bitterness. He fumed like a baited bull, but his tongue was not idle. It was not in his nature to be quiet when a wordy warfare was on foot, and he fired back broadside for broadside with such severity, that a savage, the most annoying of their persecutors, excited beyond his usual coolness, sprang to his side, and with a taunting laugh passed his hand rapidly round his head, signi-

fyng what would be his fate. He concluded by pulling off Adherbal's woollen cap, and giving his hair a hearty jerk, as if in the act of tearing off the scalp. This last part of the dumb show was performed with such good will, that it fairly brought tears in the eyes of the woodsman, and fully roused his choler.

His fiery eye grew more venomous as it rested on his swarthy assailant, who seeing that his arms were secured, stood enjoying his pain. The old woodsman, however, had more ways of attack than his opponent was aware of; for in answer to the assault, he projected his foot with such force against the abdomen of the Indian, that it spurned him backward to the ground. The savage sprang up, but his hostile intentions were arrested by Sharatack. He then drew off in sullen silence, and the crowd, taking warning, kept a greater distance, and confined their animosity to words.

The prisoners were now conducted into a

large lodge, and secured to its sides. The arms of all were bound, with the exception of Lucy, who, by a kind of savage delicacy, was confined by the side of her father, with her arms free.

The rifles and other accoutrements, not having been allotted, were placed in a distant part of the lodge. These arrangements completed, a guard was stationed at the entrance, and the prisoners were left to their gloomy thoughts.

CHAPTER VII.

His chiefs stood round—

MOORE.

THERE was no delay in deciding the fate of the prisoners. By common consent the warriors began to assemble in the lodge of the chief.

In the centre, on an elevated seat, sat an aged Indian. Full seventy winters had thrown their snows upon his head; still his form was erect, and his step proud. He had those dark glittering eyes that time can never dim, and which almost startle those who meet their glance. His knitted brow and seamed face were covered with red paint, striped

with black. His head was shorn, with the exception of a single long lock of snow-white hair which hung from his crown in strong contrast to a raven's plume, its ornament. It showed that even in old age he shrank not from battle, and still left the trophy lock for his conqueror. His withered but still sinewy breast, together with his whole body, was covered with red and black paint in alternate streaks. A tomahawk of steel lay across his bare knees, and by his side was a stone pipe. He sat sternly erect amid the crowd, speaking not a word, and scarcely moving his gleaming eyes.

Nearly half an hour had elapsed. The noise of the gathering crowd had hushed. A dead stillness reigned in the lodge. Around him sat the more ancient chiefs, then came the inferior warriors, and at the far end of the building was a group of females, who had ventured to intrude in a council of so much interest to the nation.

Close beside the chief was his son, the young Hawk, Sharatack. His robe had fallen, leaving bare his nobly-formed shoulders and chest. His hand rested on his tomahawk. He spoke not, nor moved ; but in silence awaited the opening of the council.

At length the old chief rose. A hush of death-like silence followed. Every grim face was turned towards him ; every wild eye shone with fierce but subdued excitement. He ran his glance slowly round the building ; then raising his arm and waving it over the assembled crowd, commenced his harangue.

Although his tones were tremulous with age, they were not those of mercy. His speech was short and energetic, and ended by recommending the death of the captives without reservation.

A burst of approbation followed, and a half shout of satisfaction broke from several of the younger portion of his auditory.

The Hawk Chief next rose. As he stepped into the middle of the council-chamber, a dark eye from the crowd of females rested upon him with a look in which love and fear were strongly blended. It was that of Nah-tourah, his betrothed wife.

“Sharatack has heard the words of his father,” commenced the warrior, in a tone so musical as to excite a murmur of applause from the crowd. “They are good. The warriors of the Pawnee nation listen to him, and they grow wise. Yet Sharatack would speak.

“Since he sang the war-song in the Pawnee village, he has been upon the prairie. He sought the trail of the Sioux, but it was not there. He looked for the moccasin print of the Osage, but the Osage did not venture abroad; he kept to the fire of his wigwam.

“Sharatack journeyed towards the waters of the Nemahaw. He saw the foot-prints of

white men ; he overtook, and scattered them, as the wind drives the fallen leaves of the forest. But he looked round among his own warriors, and missed many. They were dead ; and he laughed amid his grief as he said, ‘ The pale-faced prisoners shall be an offering to their spirits.’ But there was one—it was the daughter of an old pale-faced warrior. Sharatack looked at her, and he did not strike, for her voice was soft as the song of birds, and she was fair to the eye of Sharatack as the flower of the prairie. He loved to look upon her. He said that she should live in his lodge—that she should become the mother of his children. I have spoken. Let the white men die ; let the maiden be the wife of Sharatack.”

A low murmur of assent followed the speech of the young warrior. The custom of selecting a prisoner, taken in war, for a wife, or to supply the place of a relative, has prevailed from time immemorial among these

savage nations. The individual thus adopted immediately becomes a member of the tribe, and is ever afterwards looked upon as one of themselves.

The openly-avowed resolution of Sharatack created, therefore, no surprise.

There was one, however, in whom each sentence as it dropped from his lips excited feelings of the deepest anguish. It was Nah-tourah. At first she had listened with all a woman's fondness to the words of him she loved; but when he spoke of Lucy—of her beauty, of his attachment, of his resolution to make her his wife, she hung upon his words with a deep—a fearful interest. Every expression withered a hope; and when he ceased, she was almost heart-broken.

She stood for a moment with her hands clasped, and her eyes fixed upon him with a wild imploring gaze. She hoped in vain; for Sharatack muffled himself in his robe and disappeared among the crowd.

Nahtourah quitted the building ; she hurried through the town till she came to the lodge where the prisoners were confined. She stole into the outer entrance, to obtain a view of her rival ; but the Indian stationed there sternly ordered her back. She dared not persist, and with a disordered step roamed through the town.

A loud whoop soon informed her that the council was dissolved ; and in a few moments the whole horde poured out, rending the sky with their yells. A number rushed to the water, forded the river, and commenced breaking limbs from the dead trees. Others collected bark. Old and young, women and children, all engaged with the same ready zeal.

Nahtourah knew the meaning of this—she knew that the fate of the victims was sealed, and that the stake was to terminate their existence. She felt not for them :—she thought only of her own blighted hopes. She leaned

in silence against the side of a lodge, taking no interest in a festival that had filled the village with excitement.

While thus, a withered squaw, who was jogging past with an armful of wood, approached her. She was aware of her love for Sharatack. She had seen her agitation in the council-chamber, but she was gall-hearted, and could not let slip an opportunity of stinging the poor girl, whose beauty she envied.

“Why is Nahtourah sad? Sharatack has returned.”

Nahtourah made no answer.

“He has brought scalps, he has brought prisoners.”

Still the maid was silent.

“He has brought a pale-faced wife, too. He will have two wives. The fair skin shall be first, and Nahtourah shall serve her.”

The eye of Nahtourah flashed fire. “Never! by the Great Spirit, never!”

As she spoke, she snatched up a long leathern halter that was lying at the door of the lodge. She fled from the spot, crossed the river, and in a few minutes had caught a horse, and was galloping at full speed over the prairie.

The old squaw laughed malignantly, and proceeded in preparing for the scene of torture.

CHAPTER VIII.

Has thy flesh and blood a charm against heated iron and scalding oil ?

SCOTT.

AN hour had elapsed since the prisoners were left to themselves. The interval had been passed in gloomy silence by all, with the exception of Adherbal, whose irritable feelings had been excited by the attack upon himself, and by the loss of his woollen cap. He belonged to that class of people who take all pains to keep clear of trouble, but when it *does* overtake them feel fully privileged to grumble.

The tightness with which the cords were fastened round his arms drew forth many an impatient ejaculation.

“ I wouldn’t tie a brute in this manner,” muttered he. “ If ever a Pawnee comes within hail of my fist or fingers, I’ll think of this :—Pah ! it’s dreadful annoying.”

He was cut short by the sound of voices, and three Indians, clad in white robes, entered. Their faces were striped with white and black paint, and each was armed with a knife. Without speaking, they walked to the spot where Weazen lay half dead with terror. He shrank from them ; but they cut his cords, and seizing him, attempted to drag him to the door. At first his voice had been choked with apprehension ; but a fearful presentiment now flashing across him, he cried loudly for help.

“ Norton ! Norton ! ” shrieked he, “ will

you see me dragged off without striking a blow?"

By a violent effort, he freed himself, ran to Adherbal, and clung to him.

"Help! Adherbal, help! they will murder me!"

The face of Adherbal grew red as fire. He struggled with might and main to break his bonds. "Was my arms but free," muttered he, grinding his teeth, "neither of them devil's whelps should leave this lodge alive."

Weazen threw his arms round his neck, and clung convulsively to it.

"Do not shake me off, Adherbal, — do not!" said he wildly; "they will kill me. You do not know how I fear death—I fear it."

His efforts and cries were of no avail. The Indians loosed his hold and dragged him across the building. He grasped a

post to impede their progress, but was torn from it. He then clenched his hands in the wicker-work of the lodge; but his hold was soon loosened, and after one or two futile efforts to escape, he was forced out of the door, amid his own piercing shrieks and the bellosed anathemas of Adherbal.

Upon reaching the open air, a crowd of savages surrounded him, uttering taunts, and ringing in his ears demoniac threats of torture. These he understood not; but the exulting ferocity in their features warned him of his fate, and rendered him frantic. At one moment he shrieked for mercy, at another he clung to those around, begging their interference; then again he struggled with efforts rendered powerful by the frenzy of fear.

This frantic exertion could not last long; nature became exhausted, and he fainted.

A crowd had collected in the prairie, op-

posite the far end of the town, and towards this part he was carried. Fierce faces were thrust from the lodges as he was borne past, and even the old and decrepit, who had outlived everything but their evil passions, were seen hobbling from their dens to witness the jubilee. The crowd opened as he was brought forward, and closed behind him like the billows of the sea.

In the centre of a wide circle of savages, a stake driven into the ground intimated the fate that awaited him. Near it were piles of bark, branches of dead trees, and splinters of pitchy wood. Several Indians smeared with black paint were quietly seated around, like the presiding demons at some infernal orgie.

When Weazen reached the spot, water was brought to revive him. Half an hour, however, elapsed before he had recovered and was fully alive to his situation. He had but little time for reflection, for an Indian

seized him for the purpose of dragging him to the stake, when a shrill voice rose in sharp remonstrance behind the crowd. The next moment there was a violent bustle, and the old squaw who had taunted Nahtourah burst through the press. Holding up a kind of leathern petticoat with one hand, she stalked up to the Indian who held Weazen. With the other hand she jerked loose his grasp, and striding over the prostrate prisoner, commenced a hot harangue. A cloud of discontent darkened the brows of several of the elder warriors; but there was something so venomous about the tart-looking eye of the shrew, that they ventured no opposition to whatever proposition she had made. Occasionally a shout of laughter or a taunt would burst from one in the mass. But the biting retort which followed generally silenced the adventurous individual who presumed to take up the gauntlet with so loquacious an antagonist.

After much demur, her proposition was acceded to, and seizing Weazen by the collar, she jerked him to his feet. Then, much in the same manner as a farmer leads off a young urchin detected in pilfering his orchard, the squaw conducted through the crowd her intended lord and master.

Scarcely were they clear of the mass, when a horseman was seen at a short distance, dashing with hot haste to the village. The next moment he was in the midst of them. He shouted something which was answered by a wild whoop from the savages, and which caused the squaw to hurry her prize out of sight.

In the mean time, the crowd flooded to the lodge of the captives, burst in and found it empty; then rushed out, scattered in every direction, and scarcely a moment elapsed before above a hundred had caught horses,

and were speeding at full gallop over the prairie.

The vacancy of the lodge which had been employed as a prison shall be accounted for in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

There was racing, and chasing, on Cannobie Lea.

SCOTT.

AMONG the prisoners deep silence succeeded the momentary excitement created by dragging off Weazen. Images of horror were floating through the minds of all with the exception of Adherbal, who breathed nothing but vengeance.

Lucy lay with her head upon her father's shoulder, and her half-sobbed breathing showed her extreme agitation. She was roused by the voice of Adherbal :

“ I think, lady,” said he, “ as your hands,

are loose, perhaps you might get a grip of my knife, pull it from the scabbard, and cut these thongs."

In accordance with this wish Lucy leaned forward, but could not reach him.

"It's a monstrous pity your arm isn't a foot longer," muttered he: "it would do then, though it mightn't look so well.—But, hist! Draw back, I heerd a voice at the door. I reckon another will have to smell fire now."

There was a low conversation in the passage. The bear-skin which covered the opening was then flung back, and a female rushed in. There was something noble and at the same time wild in her aspect. She could not have been older than twenty. She was tall; her long hair, parted in front, and held back from her face only by a black band, fell in jetty locks upon her shoulders. Her features were beautiful, but there was now a pride and haughtiness in them, and her jet black eye seemed almost bathed in flame.

She was apparelled much after the fashion of the warriors: a buffalo-robe was belted round her waist, reaching in a short skirt to her knees, which were covered with leggins of highly-wrought deer-skin, down to the beautifully-ornamented moccasin. She might have been a model for an Indian Diana. It was Nahtourah.

She entered; with a keen searching glance scanning the group, and her eye lingered upon Lucy. She cast a look towards the entrance; then placing her finger upon her lips, moved swiftly across the building to Adherbal, and drew his knife.

“ You Indian she-devil ! you will not kill us in cold blood ? ”

“ Huh ! ” ejaculated the girl, placing her finger on her lip. With a hasty blow she severed his bonds, and then those of Norton.

Adherbal leaped to his feet.

In a moment the others were free; the girl motioned them to retain their position,

and going to Herrick, Norton, and Adherbal, she restored to the last his knife, and beckoned them to follow. On reaching the bear-skin, she pointed through the crevice to the guard, who was sitting with his back towards them, humming a low chant.

Adherbal raised his knife with a significant motion; but the girl seized his hand, and shook her head. She sprang across the lodge, and returned with the thongs, which had before bound the prisoners, and reached them to Norton; then drew herself up, as if waiting for them to execute their task.

Just then, the Indian turned; Norton dashed up the bear-skin, threw him to the ground, and clasped his hand over his mouth. Adherbal gripped his arms, while Herrick passed the thong round them, binding them together behind his back: he then secured his legs.

“Keep your hand over his mouth till I make a gag,” said Adherbal, rolling up a piece of leather which he drew from his

pocket. "There! that will do!" said he. "Pass a thong over his mouth to make the gag keep its place."

These manœuvres were completed with celerity; after which, they carried the savage into the lodge, and secured his feet to a post. They then stepped to the stack of fire-arms, each selecting his own weapon and pouch. Herrick thought of Lucy; he also cast a look towards Arden, who was standing at a short distance with his yager in his hand, and his eyes fixed upon Lucy, who was leaning on her father's arm. She raised her eyes, and they met Herrick. There was something in that single glance that brought him to her side. The Indian maid was at the door, beckoning them forward.

"Mr. Wilford, you are wounded," said Herrick; "allow me to assist your daughter. Will you permit me, Miss Wilford?" said he, fixing his eyes on hers.

Lucy leaned forward to conceal her face.

Her lips moved and a faint sound came from them, as she held out her hand to him.

With a smothered execration Arden sprang to the entrance, but was stopped by the Indian maid.

“ I *will* pass ; by Heaven I *will* ! ” shouted he loudly. The girl clasped her hand over his mouth. He flung her back ; but she seized him by the throat,—her lip quivered, her eyes shot fire. Thrusting her hand in the folds of her robe, she drew out a knife. But just then Norton came up and released him.

“ Mr. Arden,” said he, “ this is no time for mad freaks. Every moment is fraught with peril. Will you betray us all ? will you raise your hand against this girl, who has risked every thing for our sake ? The lives of more than yourself depend upon your prudence. Remember *that*.”

Arden, abashed at the rebuke, fell back, and the girl led the way out of the building towards a ravine at a little distance. The

combined yells of the Indians rose up in a roar at the far end of the village, but not a soul stirred in the neighbourhood of the fugitives.

Grasping his rifle in one hand, Herrick threw his other arm round Lucy, and half supporting, hurried her on. He felt her shudder at every successive shout, and could not but feel a thrill of horror at the supposed fate of poor Weazen. They soon reached the ravine. It was rough and ragged, worn by the rushing of rain, and led directly to the Platte.

Down this the party hurried, and a few moments brought them to the water. Here Nahtourah drew her moccasins from her feet, stole up the bank, looked about the village, then bounding down, beckoned them to follow her, as she pursued a hasty course through the water, screened from view by the bank.

“The young lady must be carried: shall

I do it?" said Norton, casting a humorous glance towards Herrick.

"No! no!" answered he impatiently. "*I* can do that; take my rifle."

Lucy made but slight objection, and lifting her in his arms, Herrick followed their guide, who kept to the water for several hundred yards, until she came to a long island covered with forest.

To be better understood, it may be necessary to describe the Platte river. It is in some places two miles in width, covered with thickly-wooded islands, and in depth varies from two inches to twelve, except in the channel, which is about fifty yards wide, and from five to twenty feet in depth.

It was down one of the shallowest portions of the river that the fugitives pursued their course. Upon reaching the island, their female guide struck into a narrow hunting trail, running through an entangled mass of underwood. Here Herrick placed his charge upon her feet,

and taking his rifle, pressed after their guide, who moved with the lightness of a fawn, occasionally pausing to listen to the sounds which came from the town. Upon reaching the extremity of the island, to their surprise, they found the forethought of the Indian girl had provided horses. It was evident that she had caught them as they strayed for pasturage, for they were merely secured by halters of leather and were unsaddled. She sprang upon one, and motioned the others to follow her example.

“My daughter,” said Mr. Wilford, looking anxiously around.

“Leave her to me,” said Herrick: “I can take care of her. This horse,” said he, moving towards a powerful black, “can bear us both.”

“Take her then. To you I commit her,” said her father. “But guard her as you would your life.”

Herrick was already mounted. “Don’t fear me. Will *you* trust me, Miss Wilford?” Lucy looked in his face: that look spoke.

everything. The next instant his arm supported her in front of him. Arden leaped on a horse and sulkily followed.

“This animal is oncomfortable small,” said Adherbal, eyeing a small mule, the only unappropriated steed. “Her legs are dreadful short, and I reckon will be mighty slow in getting over the ground. Howsomdever——” He finished the sentence by striding from a stump across her back. The party had already advanced, and he was the last; so he lashed his mule, and was soon up with them.

They left the island and proceeded at a swift gallop down the bed of the river, now dry, owing to a dearth of rain. It was of sand, and hard and smooth. In front rode the Indian girl, governing her wild steed with an ease that would have raised a feeling of envy in the breast of many a horseman of the settlements. She had evidently selected the best for her own use; for as she was to guide, it was necessary that her horse should be able to hold out;

and should their flight be detected, her only safety was in the speed of the animal.

They had gone but a short distance, when she abruptly checked her horse until he fell back upon his haunches; while an emphatically ejaculated "Ugh!" burst from her lips. Norton was at her side in an instant; she pointed to the prairie.

"Ha! I see it; a mounted Indian. Draw nearer the bank," said he to those around him. "Quick! quick! he has not yet discovered us." But as he spoke, the Indian, who had been riding slowly, stopped short and gazed at them, then with a whoop jerked his horse round and galloped for the village.

"My yager may reach him," said Norton, raising the weapon; but before he could pull the trigger, the girl struck up the barrel, and pointed impatiently towards the village.

"Will the white man call the Pawnee upon him?" said she, speaking for the first time, but in her own tongue.

Though Norton was little skilled in the language, he caught the drift of her words.

“Right, girl, right!” said he, lowering the weapon. “We may gain time while this fellow is carrying the news, although he goes like the wind. Push on; ’tis a matter of life and death.”

The Indian maid had already started at full speed, and the others followed at the full stretch of their horses’ power. Close at her heels followed the horses of Herrick and Mr. Wilford. They were about a mile from the village when their guide left the bed of the river, which was again covered with water, and dashed up the bank into the prairie. The rest followed; and last of all, Adherbal spattered through like a wild duck, and ascended. Norton drew in, and waited for him.

“Go on, Norton,—don’t wait for me,” said he: “it will be of no use; I’m accustomed to being hunted, and will contrive to give them the slip. You will be needed, to take care of

the others. I don't see why this beast didn't let her legs grow a foot longer while they was about it, for now they are good for nothing in a chase. Go on, go on; don't wait for me. The rest will go to the devil without you!"

Thus urged, Norton no longer hesitated. As the troop fled across a high ridge, an exclamation from the Indian maiden caused those near to turn their heads. A dark flood of mounted warriors was pouring from the village.

Herrick grasped his fair burthen and struck his heels against his horse. The noble animal sprang on, and although their speed had been furious, it was now increased until every horse was urged to the utmost, except that which bore their guide. His jet black hide was unruffled, and as he sped on, he champed his leathern bit, and seemed to spurn the pace which was racking the limbs of the others.

Adherbal was now far behind. "At all events," said he, "there's comfort in knowing

they will get only one scalp. I reckon, too, they'll have to fight a few before they get that."

In a short time he reached the top of the hill, which the others had already passed, and looking back, saw the crowd of pursuers, and far in front of all an Indian mounted on a powerful horse. This observation was the work of a moment, for the next instant Adherbal vanished over the brow of the hill and lost sight of his pursuers. Suddenly a single whoop arose behind him, and the Indian sped over the hill top. Adherbal's eyes twinkled, his face grew fiery red, and he grated his clenched teeth.

"A curse on this brute!" said he, raining a shower of blows on the snorting animal: "she makes as much fuss as if she was going like a race-horse."

The Indian neared him fast. The fugitive could hear the tramp of his horse, he could hear the lash of the rider. Three leaps more, the savage was upon him; his exulting

laugh rung in his ears—Adherbal felt himself griped by the shoulder. He jerked in his mule, and made a blow with his heavy knife. “Take that to comfort you!” shouted he, as the hand that grasped him fell nerveless to the side of its owner, with the tendons of the wrist severed. At the same time he pulled round his mule, so that himself and his foe were face to face, and fired his yager. The uninjured arm of the Indian was raised with his war-club, but fell shattered to his side. Adherbal instantly grasped the bridle of the horse, and with a blow from the butt of his yager sent the rider grovelling in the dust. Then deserting his mule, he sprang to the back of the animal.

“This is something like a horse. Better luck to you next time, provided you’re not fighting agin a white man,” said he to the Indian, who was slowly rising.

A loud shout rose in the rear, and a band of savages appeared on a distant ridge. Ad-

herbal darted off at the full speed of his captured horse, and sped through ravines and over hills. His steed was unflagging, he gained upon the fugitives; the wind whistled past his ears, and he felt as if borne upon its wings.

“Go it! go it!” shouted he, as the animal flew forward, apparently eager to overtake those in front; “there’s a comfort in riding a horse.”

He soon came up with the party, who saw that he was better mounted.

“Where did you get that horse?” asked Arden.

“I swopped the mule with an Ingen.—But don’t ax questions. There’s nearly a hundred Pawnees in chase of us.”

The pursuit lasted until they came to several small islands situate in the Platte, about a hundred yards from the bank, and crowded with trees and underwood. Norton here drew in his horse.

“ There is no timber within many miles of this spot, excepting at the cliffs ; and if we pass this spot, we shall run a narrow chance. We may find concealment here, or maintain our position until night, and then escape in the dark.”

Herrick took advantage of the momentary pause to whisper a few words to his charge, and uttered an earnest hope that they might escape.

“ Herrick,” said Lucy earnestly, “ I am not sanguine, but remember this ;—when we are in extremity, leave me and save yourself.”

“ Miss Wilford—Lucy,” said Herrick in a low tone, “ what have I to live for when you are gone ? If I desert you, may God desert me !”

Lucy made no reply, but the blood mantled even to her forehead. Herrick saw it and went on : “ Lucy,” said he, “ I have passed

many unhappy hours since we parted at Wolf Hill."

She was silent.

"I have not before spoken of this," said he, "but do you remember the chamber on the Missouri?" He felt her tremble on his arm.

"Do you remember who was with you?" said he.

Still she was silent.

"It was Frank Arden."

Lucy looked full in his eyes.

"Herrick, you are ever too hasty; you should not have left me in anger at such a time."

"Lucy," said he, "may I hope, that if we reach the settlements——"

"Hush, hush!" said she; "this is no time for such a conversation; Norton is coming towards us."

The hunter approached. "We must take to this island," said he, "and hide or fight

till night. A stout resistance will cool their ardour."

As they advanced, however, a wild cry burst from the Indian maid. She had reined her black horse full in their path, and waved them back. Her eye flashed; every muscle of her face seemed alive.

"I know not what to make of this," said Norton to Adherbal: "the island is our best chance."

"I reckon you'm right," replied the other. "As long as the squaw acted sensible, we followed her; but now we'll judge for ourselves."

While speaking, they kept on, in defiance of her motions. Just then a loud huzza was heard in front of them, and a dozen Rangers, with old Sip in company, sprang from the thicket they were approaching. A shout of joy burst from Adherbal.

"Whoop! huzza!" yelled he. "We'll

was them red reptiles yet. I have a grudge agin the fellow that stole my cap."

The Indian girl gazed at the reinforcement, at the party, then at the approaching band of savages. She reined in her steed on his haunches; both the animal and his rider looked as if stricken with madness. She then loosed the rein. She was by the side of Herick, and, before he suspected it, tore Lucy from his arms, held her firmly by the waist in front of her, and darted across the prairie.

CHAPTER X.

From the deepest of the forest shades
Now gleamed the rifles' quick red light,
And whirring shafts and flashing blades
Were rife—

So unexpected had been the manœuvre of Nahtourah, that she gained a start of a hundred yards. Herrick, however, recovered himself, and in a moment dashed after her. Norton, after a vain attempt to overtake him, returned, and with the rest of the band made for the thicket, and in a short time both Herrick and the Indian maid were out of sight. Arden had made a movement ; but when Her-

rick took the chase, he sulkily checked his horse.

In the mean time, the Pawnees were swarming over the prairie. At first one or two had set out in pursuit of Herrick and Nahtourah, but returned, giving up the chase as useless. Their whole machination was now directed against the main body of whites. They stole along the prairie, taking advantage of the tall grass and irregularities of ground, until not a point of the island was unwatched.

The whites expected no mercy, and their preparations were cool and determined. Their enemies, however, had them at advantage, and might harass them at their leisure.

Norton, who had busied himself in stationing the men, now ran his eye along the prairie, which was alive with unseen foes.

“Not a limb in sight!” muttered he;
“not a mark for a rifle! They will lie so for hours.”

A Ranger was stationed upon a high jutting

point of land, nearest the Indians, screened behind a fallen tree.

“Stand up, Wilson,” said Arden, addressing him, “and tell us what these fellows are about: keep your body behind yon tree, or an arrow may reach you.”

The Ranger rose, and, with a fool-hardy desire of displaying his courage, stretched himself to his full height, and even stood upon the log which had sheltered him. “I see them,” said he; “they lie close, they seem—” His speech was cut short by the report of a rifle. A bullet whistled past his ear and buried itself in a sapling a few inches from his head.

“Goy!” said Sip close at his side, “dat liked to a been a tickler. It’ll larn you next time you look at Ingens.”

“Who carries that rifle?” demanded Arden. “It cannot be a Pawnee.”

“I reckon it’s the half-breed, Bonfleur,” said Adherbal. “He hates the whites worse

than the devil, and sends a bullet monstrous sure.—Wilson, you should feel more than common comfortable; it isn't often that he misses."

"If he is silenced," said Arden, "I doubt whether another can use the weapon.—Rif-ton," said he, beckoning the hunter, who was crouching on his belly behind a fragment of rock, with his rifle levelled over the top, ready to take advantage of the first exposure of an enemy,—“ Rifton, I have work for you. Come here.” The hunter withdrew his weapon, and cautiously dragged his lumbering form to the side of the young officer.

"Do you see that bush," said Arden, "on the top of yon swell of earth?"

"Ay! I do," answered the other, half raising his body and looking earnestly. "Stop! there's an Indian under it; I see his head. As sure as my name is Rifton, 'tis the fellow with the rifle—'tis Bonfleur!"

"That opening in the bush exposes his

body," said Arden. "It's a long shot. Could you quiet him?"

"I can split the nose of an antelope at a hundred yards," replied Rifton; "and if I miss putting a bullet through his skin, he'll be the first that could ever boast of having escaped when I was bent on killing."

As he spoke, he raised the gun to his shoulder, and levelled its barrel. He held it steady; then, with an expression of impatience, dropped it in the hollow of his arm.

"How now? why do you not fire?"

"Curse the fellow!" replied Rifton, "his rifle covers the vital parts, and a bullet might glance from its breech; I've got a *carackter* for shooting, and I don't want to lose it all to once."

Scarcely had he spoken, when Bonfleur raised his weapon to aim at one of the whites.

Before he had time to accomplish his purpose, Rifton's rifle was to his cheek, and

poured forth its contents. The half-breed dropped his gun and raised himself at full length. At the instant half a dozen rifles were fired, and several bullets struck him.

“That’s a waste of powder and ball,” said Adherbal. “There was no use in shooting a man that had his death-wound. Them Rangers never will larn economy. Them shots might have sarved for six Ingens.”

A yell followed the fall of the half-breed, who was one of their most distinguished warriors; but when it had died away, all was dead stillness, except the occasional discharge of a rifle, showing that an enemy had exposed himself, or an arrow darting through the bushes, telling some startled Ranger that his station was detected.

About sunset, a general movement among the Indians warned the whites to be on the watch. The grass waved and rustled; a shower of arrows flew from it, and about

thirty Indians sprang down the bank and made for the island.

“Keep cool,” said Arden in a stern, calm voice. “Take sure aim, then pull; lie close.”

Close at the end of the island was another of smaller size, and nearer the bank, and thickly overrun with underwood. Scarcely had the Indians started from the prairie, than a flood of fire burst from this thicket, and a volley of bullets stretched several Pawnees on the sand: a loud whoop succeeded.

“That was an Ingen war-cry,” said Adherbal. “Now, boys! give the Pawnees your shot.”

The order was obeyed.

The Pawnees were staggered by the cross fire. Some paused in mid career, and others fled back to the bank. Three desperate fellows, undaunted by the fate of their comrades, rushed on, and were despatched by the cutlasses of the Rangers. Another and louder

shout burst from the small island ; and a tall Indian in a scarlet blanket appeared, while several others were seen at their posts. All were clad in blankets, and carried rifles.

“ That’s a Konza nest,” said Adherbal to Norton. “ Do you know the leader ? ”

The truth now flashed upon him. It was easy to recognize the martial form of the Black Wolf. His dress and the desperate daring of his attack left no doubt ; for none but he would have ventured thus to brave the whole force of the Pawnee town.

“ I know him now,” replied he : “ the Black Wolf of the Konzas.”

The name was overheard by the Rangers, and passed from mouth to mouth. When it was known that this stern chieftain with his band of warriors were at hand, their hope ran high, and they gave a loud and long huzza. It was answered by the Konza war-cry. The whoop was fierce ; but it came from a scanty band, and was drowned by the

loud howl of fury that surged up from the Pawnees on the prairie.

The deadly reception that had greeted their assault had cooled their impetuosity, and they remained irresolute, though bloody-minded as ever. The position of the Konzas was such, that any attempt of the Pawnees at forcing the strong-hold of the whites would expose them to a murderous cross-fire; and the Konzas were protected in the same manner by the rifles of the whites. The sun now sank below the hills, and twilight was beginning to set in.

“When darkness comes on, we must make an effort,” said Adherbal, reloading his rifle, which he had just discharged, to the great annoyance of an Indian, who was skipping about with his arm dangling at his side. “That was a bad shot, because——”

He was interrupted by a cry from Sip. “What’s the matter?” demanded he, startled by the yell.

“Mighty near losin t’odder ear!” said Sip;
“a arrer whistled close to um.”

“Pish! is that all? I thought you was wounded mortal. I was thinking how a man feels when he’s dead.”

“Goy! mus feel bad!” said Sip, opening his eyes, as if the subject had never struck him in that light before.

“And then,” said Adherbal, “if he has a tribe of sins on his back!”

Sip did not seem to appreciate this aggravation of misery, for he made no reply, and his calmness started a new idea in the mind of Adherbal.

“Sip,” said he abruptly, “I wonder if a Nigger’s got a soul: because if he hasn’t, he’s circumstanced more advantageous in this fight than the rest, seeing that he has nothing to answer for.”

“Shoare I don’ know,” replied Sip; “speck he has. If you’m got any tobacco, I’d like to borry a little.”

“ There ’s the tobacco,” said Adherbal, reaching out the wished-for article. “ But you ’m wonderful ignorant about yourself. If *you* don’t know, who am I to ax about it ? ”

“ Ax Mas John,” replied the negro, handing back the roll of tobacco ; “ speck he can tell. I nebber larned sich matters.”

“ If I *did* ax him, I couldn’t believe what he said, he’s got such a monstrous habit of——”

“ Zaggeratin,” said Sip ; “ dat ’s it.”

“ I don’t mean any such thing. I don’t know what zaggerating is ; and I never use words I don’t understand, more than I load my rifle with strange bullets. I look upon the mouth as the same sort of defensive wepon for the feelings, that the rifle is for the body. The words is the bullets. ‘ If they don’t fit its bore, they never can hit the mark.”

“ I ’gree wid you mos distinckly,” said Sip, “ ’cept when you say Mas John lies.”

In a short time the twilight deepened into gloom, and the darker shades of night came on. Norton was at his post keeping an anxious eye on the prairie, when he was startled by feeling a heavy hand on his arm ; and looking up, he saw the face of an Indian glaring over his shoulder. With a sudden effort he sprang to his feet and levelled his gun ; but the Indian was quicker, and grasping the barrel, turned it aside, and at the same time spoke :

“ Will the white man slay his brother ? ” said he in the Konza tongue.

“ Ha ! I should know that voice,” exclaimed Norton.

“ To be sure you should, and the red blanket too,” said Adherbal, who, seeing the struggle, had hastened up : “ ’tis the Black Wolf of the Konzas.”

Favoured by the obscurity, this chief had stolen from his lurking-place to the island of the whites. He urged strongly that they

should lose no time in effecting their escape. He proposed to take to the water, by the far side of the island, where it was but a few inches in depth. He then offered to accompany them with his men to the cliffs at several miles' distance, where they could avail themselves of a forest. It was the only wood near, except what grew upon the few scattering islands in the Platte, and which had served to screen him and his warriors, as they stole to the assistance of the whites. In addition to this, he mentioned that Wahcourah, a brave young warrior of his band, while hanging round the Pawnees who had taken the whites prisoners, had crossed a broad trail of white men. He suspected them to be trappers, and had gone to warn them of the danger of their fellows; and should these trappers make for the Pawnee town, the shortest path was along the cliffs, where they might probably be met. He had sent out several of his young men as scouts. They had returned

with information that the islands were narrowly watched at all points ; but by stripping themselves, they had been able to steal upon two of the Pawnee watch, and had killed them without giving an alarm. That path was therefore clear, and presented a fair chance of escape. The opportunity was not to be neglected ; and in a few minutes the whole party were in motion.

CHAPTER XI

'Tis true they are a lawless brood
But rough in form, nor mild in mood ;
And every creed, and every race,
With them hath found, may find a place.

Bride of Abydos.

THE sun was about an hour high in the west, when a band of men slowly wound their way down a rugged but gradual path among the cliffs, within about ten miles of the Pawnee town. The individuals composing it were uncouth in their attire. Some were dressed in skins ; some in large overcoats of blanket cloth, some in the drapery of Indians, and

the dress of others might have been pronounced as coming from the settlements; but so time-worn, and so disfigured by exposure and rough usage, that it would have perplexed the maker to recognise the work of his own hands. Round the waist of each was buckled a belt, to which was attached a scabbard of undressed hide, containing a large hunting-knife. Each was armed with a rifle, and furnished with horn and pouch. Such was the garb of the party, and such is the appearance of most of the trappers who sojourn far away in the deep recesses of the Rocky Mountains.

They numbered about two hundred; as fearless and vagabond a crew as ever pulled a trigger. In front of them, a large drove of mules were carefully picking their way towards the plain beneath. They were well laden with iron beaver traps, bales of fur, and the different encumbrances necessary to be transported when a trapping camp is on

the move. About a dozen savage-looking fellows were directing their motions: the rest were idling along, and slowly descending from one cliff to another.

Among the last, was one person who, from the command he appeared to take of their motions, was the captain. He was yet young, about five-and-thirty. He was rather above the medium height; his features had once been fine, but had now a *caré-worn* look. His countenance was one which a physiognomist would have called intellectual, and the last that he would have expected to find among so wild a horde. There was at the same time an expression of benevolence, united with quiet firmness and dignity, that enforced respect. This was cheerfully yielded by his band, and every calm order was as promptly obeyed as a stern mandate from another backed by menace. His frame, though light, denoted strength; every sinew from severe exercise was strung to the utter-

most, and every thew appeared of iron texture.

Although he sauntered idly along, still from habit his eye was restless and searching; for, from a long sojourn amid hostile people, he had acquired incessant watchfulness. At one moment he would take a sweeping view of the plain beneath; the next he would glance upward, and scan the different ridges. Several times he paused, and carefully surveyed the ragged range of trees beneath. At last, coming to some determination, he threw his rifle in the hollow of his arm, and proceeded silently and in apparent abstraction. He continued thus, until the rough pathway had been passed, and the whole party were assembled in the prairie.

“Hasbrook,” said he, addressing a heavy-limbed trapper, whose bluff features and playful eye at once spoke in his favour, “what is the distance between this and the Pawnee villages?”

“ About ten miles to the Grand Pawnees ; the others are further.”

“ Too near ! too near !” muttered he. “ We should be a rich prize. What number of fighting men can they muster ?”

“ A thousand at least,” replied Hasbrook.

The other was silent for a few moments. “ Our numbers, with our rifles,” said he at length, “ will overawe them. There is little doubt that they will know we are here.”

“ That ’s certain,” said Hasbrook. “ A fellow has been skulking after us the whole afternoon. I several times caught sight of him among the cliffs, but always a great way off. He dared not come within rifle-shot.”

“ He was wise in that,” said the captain.— “ But I see the band are waiting for orders ; yonder is your camping ground,” said he, pointing to a grove of tall trees. “ It is growing late ; the sooner you commence your preparations, the less will remain to be done after night-fall.—Stop !” said he, seeing them

hurrying off. "We are in the neighbourhood of the Pawnee towns; a watch must be kept during the night—you can make your own choice. Off with you!"

The sound of bustle and preparation now arose among them. Each hurried to look after his own mules, and to separate his own traps from those of his comrades. Those who had previously taken charge of the drove of mules abandoned them to their respective owners. The labours of the day were over, and there was a proportionable elevation in the spirits of all. Jeering words were recklessly bandied from one to the other, and received with perfect good-humour. Jests flew from mouth to mouth, and the woods frequently rang with loud and boisterous laughter.

The preparation was soon completed. About thirty fires were gleaming in the grove, and groups of hardy, weather-beaten men were reposing in front of them. Tents

were here and there erected, to protect the furs from the night-dews; and around each fire a fellow with his arms bared to the elbows was discharging the duties of cook; occasionally joining in the conversation of the rest, who were watching his movements with that impatience always evinced by hungry travellers when waiting for a meal.

Within a few yards of each fire was a stack of arms, with the horn and pouch of each gun hanging to its rammer, ready to be snatched at a moment's warning.

A little apart from the rest sat the captain. He shared not in the general merriment, but looked on with a calm and kindly eye until roused by Hasbrook.

"Captain Wharton," said he, "if you will step out of the timber, you may see the Indian that followed us. He is on the cliff."

Without reply, the other rose. When they came to the edge of the grove, they found several trappers watching the savage, who

was standing upon a high and distant cliff, beyond the reach of fire-arms.

“ ’Tis impossible to touch him from here,” said Hasbrook.

“ It is not necessary,” replied the captain: “ his death would be of no service. — What is the name of the half-breed of the Grand Pawnee village ?”

“ Bonfleur.”

“ This must be he, for I see the glitter of his gun-barrel. No other Pawnee uses a rifle.”

While they were speaking, the Indian left his post, and slowly descended towards them. His movements, however, were guarded.

“ He wants to carry back an exact account of our number,” said one of the trappers. “ Should he approach much nearer, he would be within rifle-shot.”

“ He must not be fired at, Bruen !” said Wharton. “ He comes openly towards us : an

enemy who trusts us should not be shot down like a skulking spy."

Still the Indian continued to descend, till he came to a jutting fragment of rock within a hundred yards. Here he paused, and held up the palm of his hand in token of amity.

"A bullet could reach him," said one of the trappers.

"He comes as a friend," was the quiet answer, given in a tone that rendered it decisive.

The Indian seeing that no attempt was made to molest him, came swiftly forward.

"That is not a Pawnee," said Hasbrook ;
"he has more the look of an Otoe."

An old trapper had been eyeing him attentively, but said nothing.

"Is he Pawnee or Otoe, Barnes?" said Wharton, addressing him ; for he knew that he rarely uttered an opinion unless asked, and was acquainted with the distinguishing marks of every savage tribe of the prairie.

“ Neither,” was the reply.

“ What then?”

“ By his paint and dress, a Konza.”

“ A Konza ! alone ! and within ten miles of the Pawnee village !” said Hasbrook.

“ If he is not, his paint and dress both lie,” replied the trapper.

Further discussion was cut short by the Indian himself, who strode fearlessly up to them. He was young, but bold and proud, both in feature and carriage. It was Wah-courah, the young Konza warrior who had been despatched by the Black Wolf to overtake the band.

Several of the more distant trappers caught sight of him, and seizing their rifles, came crowding up. The Konza observed their movements, and lawless as he knew many of these bands to be, and great as was the risk he ran of being shot, still not a muscle nor a feature moved : all was calm and collected.

“ A Pawnee in the camp !” muttered one.

“Shoot him down!” said Bruen. Murmurs were growing tumultuous, when the voice of Wharton sounded clear above them. “Silence!” said he.

The murmurs hushed, for he had acquired a strange influence over his men. The Indian then spoke:

“The Konza,” said he in a calm voice, “is the brother of the white man.”

“What says he?” demanded a dozen gruff voices.

“He says you may all go to the devil, and put up your guns,” said Barnes, the old trapper, “because he’s a Konza.”

“He’s not over civil, at all events; a taste of the wiping rod over his back would do him no harm,” said another, as he heard the very free translation of the Konza’s words.

“If you want a bullet through your head, Bruen, you had better administer it,” returned old Barnes. “Although he looks so cool, you see he has his thumb on the hammer of

his gun, and his finger on the trigger. It would take but half a second to send a ball from its muzzle."

This remark had a wonderful effect in calming the boisterous indignation of one or two who were vapouring among the crowd.

Wahcourah, who had discovered with the intuitive quickness of his race that Wharton was the leader, then addressed him, and informed him of the danger of the band of whites. He mentioned that some of them were captives in the Pawnee town, and that a moment lost might render aid too late.

A roar of fury rang from mouth to mouth as he finished. Nor was their ardour cooled when they learned that Norton and Adherbal were among the captives ; for Norton had once been one of themselves, and Adherbal had roamed over the prairies as long as any could remember. He had escaped so many perils, that they had begun to consider him one who could never meet mishap. He was

associated with some mark of kindness in the mind of all. Some he had aided when beset by dangers ; some he had assisted when wounded ; with others he had shared his last mouthful when starving ; one or two more were his warm friends, because he had flogged them, as he observed, " when they desarved it." His iron exterior and daring character had excited their admiration ; and his open disposition, notwithstanding that it was joined to a quick temper, had gained their friendship ; for they knew that the same fire that gave a glow to his temper, added warmth to his heart.

There was no consultation whether assistance should be given ; but all were for piercing at once into the heart of the village, and carrying off the captives. This gush of impetuosity was calmed by the leader, who mentioned that it would be necessary to leave about twenty to guard the tents, in which were deposited all the proceeds of a long

trapping campaign ; and with some difficulty that number was prevailed upon to remain, while the others prepared for warfare. Some cast bullets, some filled their powder-horns, and others adjusted new flints to their guns ; nor was it long before they were in readiness to march.

Wahcourah was their guide.

CHAPTER XII.

She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur ;
They 'll have fleet steeds that follow—

SCOTT.

No sooner had Nahtourah borne off Lucy, than she conveyed her at full speed. Hitherto her gallant horse had been restrained, but now she gave him the rein, and he swept on, his long mane drifting in the wind. The Platte looked like burnished silver as they glided by. Hill after hill disappeared, hollow after hollow was passed. With a feeling of hope, Lucy observed Herrick in pursuit, but had little time for observation, for the speed at which they went was dizzying. On they flew ; the band of her friends was hid from view ; the

island trees became more and more faint, and disappeared in the distance.

There was no flagging in the steed that bore them, nor hesitation in the rider. Despite its haughty look, there was something in her countenance that gained on Lucy's confidence. But there was also wild enthusiasm in it. Her black eye danced, and her slight nostril expanded, as if she gloried in the mad bounding of her horse; and her proud lip curled with scorn, as she looked back, and saw that friends and foes were far behind. A single horseman was in chase with furious speed. Her eye rested for an instant upon Lucy, and its gaze softened, and her features relaxed into a smile, as she leaned forward and pressed her lips to her forehead.

She drew herself up, and uttered a shrill cry to her horse, and shook her bridle over his head. The animal started forward like a guilty thing, and once more the sweeping of the wind along her tresses told Lucy that their

speed was furious. Not a tree was in sight. They had passed from the long dry grass to where the prairie was black and burnt. At a far distance was a slight elevation, which became more and more distinct as they went on. What at first had been a smooth outline, grew rocky and ragged. Then separate bluffs reared their heads in bold relief, and small gulleys fringed with bushes were perceptible. These grew to be ravines; and the thick shrubbery increased to lofty groves. The Indian girl paused when she reached this wood; then entered and proceeded at a more moderate rate.

She kept on until she came to a deep ravine running in the cliffs. Up this she directed her course with the boldness of one well acquainted with the spot. The path had once been the bed of a stream, but was now dry from the drought of the season. It was stony, with broken masses of rock, overgrown with bushes and weeds. Here and there, the matted foliage of some vine-covered tree drooped

over a pool of standing water, giving a sombre character to the whole place.

The powerful horse still kept on without flagging, nervously forcing a path among the rough fragments, and securing his foot-hold with never-failing accuracy.

Lucy shuddered as she clung, without knowing why, to her wild companion. The scene, her solitary situation, all favoured an act of bloodshed. The feelings of hope which she had at first cherished were fast disappearing, and her fears were again uppermost, when she was startled by the loud ejaculation of the Indian maid.

“ Ugh ! Pawnee ! ” exclaimed she, drawing in the rein until her horse reared, and looking up the ravine to a projecting fragment of rock, upon which was an Indian leaning on a long hunting-spear. Her indecision was but momentary, for lightning was not quicker than the motion with which she turned her horse, and darted down the ravine as the Indian made

a step towards her. The indifference which the savage had at first assumed, disappeared as the girl turned ; and quick as she was, he anticipated her. He uttered a loud whoop, which was answered from below, and half a dozen Indians sprang from a brake of bushes, stopped the horse in full career, and seizing the rude rein, dragged both the girl and Lucy from the back of the animal.

Nahtourah, however, was undaunted. She sprang to her feet, and jerked loose the hand of a savage that grasped Lucy. Throwing one arm round her, with the other she waved the wild group back, at the same time speaking a few vehement words in her own language. A cloud settled on the brow of the leader ; but he was apparently unconvinced, for he shook his head, and spoke to those about him, one of whom advanced, and lifting Lucy in his arms, followed him as he struck down the ravine in the direction of the Pawnee village. Nahtourah was un-

heeded. She remained dejectedly on the spot they had quitted; but at length, uttering a cry that brought her horse to her side, she sprang on his back, and clattered down the stony bed of the river.

Herrick in the mean time had kept on at the top of his horse's speed; and though the black courser distanced him, he was able to keep the chase in sight, till hidden in the forest. Upon reaching this, he was' obliged to rein in his steed, that he might follow the hoof-marks, which were firm and deep until he came to the spot where the bed of the stream entered the ravine; here they ceased. On each side was an impervious mass of under-wood. Herrick, completely at fault, was riding along the ground, searching the thickets in vain, when his ear was caught by the noise of dashing hoofs, and the next moment the Indian girl galloped in sight, but without Lucy.

A thrill of horror shot through him when

he saw her thus alone ; it was followed by a gush of fury. He stopped his horse behind a bush, and cocking his rifle, awaited her coming. Before she reached him, however, he changed his intention, and uncocking the weapon, slung it behind him, and dashing out, seized the bridle of her horse, as she was in the act of passing. An ejaculation burst from her, showing that she was completely taken by surprise ; but in a moment she recovered her composure.

“ The girl ! the girl ! Lucy ! Where is she ? ” demanded Herrick fiercely, grasping her arm, and in the anxiety of the moment forgetting that his language was unintelligible.

The other, however, surmised the import of his words, for, shaking off his grasp, she laid her finger on her lips and made a motion for silence, then beckoned him to follow her. Instead of continuing her journey on horseback, she sprang from the animal, and se-

curing him to a tree, made signs to Herrick to imitate her example. This done, she struck through the woods with a boldness and celerity that rendered it no easy task to keep in her sight. To escape Herrick, however, in his present mood, would have been a matter of much difficulty; for he followed with his gun cocked, and with burning feelings in his bosom. He thought not of treachery; but every fear was now for Lucy, whose mangled body, he apprehended, would be momentarily exposed to view. He resolved that this discovery should seal the fate of her supposed murderers, and he kept a steady eye upon his guide lest she should attempt to escape.

As they advanced she grew more circumspect, and proceeded more slowly, narrowly examining the ground, and scrutinizing the forest before venturing to cross any of its glades. At length they came almost to the base of the cliffs, where the woods were free

from shrubbery. Her eye was constantly bent on the ground in search of something. Suddenly, with a glad cry, she sprang towards a small clump of bushes growing round a rock. Herrick shuddered as he advanced, but was relieved upon seeing only a rill of water gurgling from beneath the huge stone. At the side of it, the impression of a man's hand was stamped on the soft sand, as if some one had placed it there when in the act of bending down to drink.

The girl then examined the ground in the neighbourhood, and hitting upon a trail, beckoned Herrick to follow. The truth now began to open upon him, and a ray of hope dawned.

After a short time spent in examining the marks of the trail, the girl set off at a quick pace, following the trace like a hound on the scent, and catching at every slight sign that marked the former presence of those she sought. Whilst pursuing their hurried course,

they were both suddenly arrested by hearing a loud voice at a little distance. The girl stopped short and crouched, then turning to Herrick, pointed through an opening in the trees to a party of Indians engaged in warm debate.

An object, however, of stronger interest than the savages charmed his eye; for at a short distance he saw at the foot of a tree a female, whom he immediately recognized to be Lucy. She was unbound, for the savages well knew that any attempt at escape would be fruitless.

Herrick scanned the wild group; but there were too many to attack openly with any chance of success, and he had only his dirk and rifle. He determined, therefore, to watch them, and, if possible, to effect the deliverance of Lucy by stratagem.

Disregarding the dissuading gestures of his guide, he stole through the bushes till within twenty feet of his foes. He could hear their

voices and see their excited faces. Lucy was reclining against a tree, and her whole appearance was that of one who had lost all hope. As Herrick caught the despairing expression of her countenance, the remembrance of her confiding look, as she trusted herself to his care, and then the manner in which she had been torn from him came painfully across his mind. It took from him that coolness necessary to the success of his plans. Without pausing to reflect that her best prospect of escape was in his safety, he pushed through the bushes, until he came to a tree, within a short distance of her, surrounded by a thick mass of shrubbery.

Casting a wary eye towards the group, he slowly rose behind the massive trunk, in such a manner as to be concealed from the Indians, though seen by her.

Lucy had her eyes bent sadly on the ground, but happening to raise them, they rested on the figure of Herrick. Her surprise was too

great to heed the gesture warning her to silence, and uttering a glad cry, she sprang towards him. The cry, and the direction of her movement, immediately attracted the suspicions of the Indians, one or two of whom rushing forward, detected Herrick in his lurking-place. To spring out and place himself between Lucy and her foes, was now the work of an instant. With a loud yell an Indian sprang towards him with a brandished club; Herrick's rifle was to his cheek, and the next instant a ball whistled from it, but missed its mark. He then drew his dirk and closed with his foe; but after inflicting a slight wound, was disarmed and bound by the others, who came to aid their comrade.

Herrick was one whose energies rose with misfortune, and seeing that nothing more could be done towards their escape, he turned his attention to the poor girl at his side.

Lucy regarded him for a moment with a

vacant eye, then half involuntarily sank sobbing on his shoulder. "Herrick, Herrick!" said she, "I have ruined you by my imprudence."

Herrick did his utmost to calm her. He mentioned that Nahtourah was still secreted in the woods, and might give warning to their friends; but it was long before she could be soothed. The Indians, in the mean time, resumed their journey through the forest.

CHAPTER XIII.

Remorse is as the heart in which it grows :
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance ; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison tree, that, pierced to the inmost,
Weeps only tears of poison.

Remorse, by COLERIDGE.

THE counsel of the Black Wolf was followed by Arden and the besieged party ; and by dint of great exertion, they passed without discovery the two murdered Pawnee sentinels, and crossing a slight swell, took advantage of a hollow in the prairie. Their journey was on foot. The horses were left on the island ; for a neigh, or even a heavy tramp, would have been followed by certain discovery.

Since the loss of his daughter, Mr. Wilford had kept with the rest, almost mechanically, and it was without success that Norton, who was at his side, as they traversed the wide waste, attempted to cheer him; his answer was,

“She was all I had ! she was all I had !”

Norton reminded him that Herrick was in pursuit ;—that her captor was but a woman—one who had set them free, and could certainly bear them no ill-will.

To all this Mr. Wilford made scarcely a reply, or one that only proved all attempts at consolation to be useless.

In the flight, the Black Wolf took upon himself the guidance of the party. His motions were quick and bold ; he gave his orders without consulting any one, having entire reliance upon his own abilities. His warriors obeyed every motion, and with that promptness and exactitude which showed that they too had confidence in his sagacity.

At the time that they reached the forest, the moon was there. The sky was cloudless, and very dark night with a clear and steady light. The water and the trees were silhouetted by the light, and even distant objects were distinctly visible. They had been so long without hearing the sound of pursuit that they felt comparatively safe, and were traversing a ravine at the base of the cliffs, when suddenly the chief stopped. A sound as of a person walking over dry brush was heard. With his rifle ready grasped, each man concealed himself. Presently a solitary individual was seen advancing through the gloom. He came bravely forward, not looking for danger so near the stronghold of his own tribe.

Arden was nearest him. "I'll take him," said he mentally. "It will not do to fire."

He carefully rested his gun against a tree, and drawing his cutlass, stood like a tiger preparing to leap. The Indians, seeing that

he had determined to take the fight off their hands, quietly watched his motions. In the mean time, the savage advanced rapidly until nearly upon him. "Ugh!" He sprang back. Swift as thought, Arden leaped upon him; his cutlass flashed in the moonbeams, but its descending motion was arrested by the steady arm of the savage. For a moment they glared at each other; then a struggle was made by Arden to free his armed hand from the gripe of the Indian, who clung to it with nervous strength.

The frame of the Pawnee was agile, but wanted the sinewy texture of his opponent; and seeing that he was losing his grasp, he relinquished the unarmed hand, and united the strength of both his own to wrench from Arden his weapon. Taking advantage of this movement, Arden seized him by the throat. The Indian writhed and twisted, fearful to relax his grasp, and equally certain of death if not freed from the strangling gripe

of his adversary. At length, unable to endure the suffocation, he attempted with both hands to free his throat. He struggled fiercely—for it was for life,—for a single gasp of air.

“Now, Mr. Arden, now!” said one of the hunters, who was watching the conflict, so confident of the result that he did not offer to interfere:—“now is the time; let him feel the cold iron.”

Contrary however to this advice, Arden retained his hold without using the weapon.

After one or two desperate jerks at the arm, the efforts of the Indian grew fainter, and were made at random, frequently clutching at the empty air. It was then that Arden loosed his grasp and flung him from him.

“He’s kicking yet,” said the hunter, whose name was Shelton. “I’ll finish him.”

“Touch him at your peril!” said Arden in a low, stern voice. “Had I wished his death,

I needed no assistance to accomplish it. He is but a boy—it were a shame to slay him.”

“Mr. Arden’s very sparing of blood to-night,” said Shelton, turning to the light a face which for malignity and ferocity might have served a fiend. “He was not always so.”

“Hush ! Shelton,” whispered Rifton. “Do not taunt him.”

The proud lip of Arden curled at the words of Shelton. He deigned not to answer him directly, but addressed the whole group:—

“I have spared that Indian, and have my reasons for it. No one shall do him further harm: *if he does*——” He finished the sentence by patting the lock of his rifle, in a manner sufficiently expressive of his meaning.

Shelton felt that the remark was aimed at him, and although cowed by the energetic spirit of the officer, still he determined to risk

a retort. Turning to Rifton, he said—"He was not always so merciful; but this Indian looks like the one he threw over the cliff in a skirmish two years ago. Since then——"

He had not time to finish the sentence, for Arden's hand was on his throat. Shaking him with a fury that rendered powerless all his efforts to free himself, "Villain!" said he in the hushed voice of deep passion, "dare but breathe *that* into my ear—*dare* but hint another word respecting *that*, and, by all the powers of earth, *that word* shall be your last!"

He flung the cowed ruffian from him, and for a moment or two paced the glade.

The Indians, unable to understand the dialogue, were astonished at the conflict between the two whites. The chief, however, lost no time in resuming their journey. The merciful intention of Arden towards the Pawnee was of no avail; for no sooner had they started, than one of the Konzas stole to the

spot where he lay, finished him with a blow of his tomahawk, and tore off the reeking trophy of an enemy's destruction.

The Black Wolf led the way directly to the cliffs, whose beetling brow overhung the forest. He was conscious that should they keep in the woods, they could not escape; for in an hour or two the Pawnees would be on their trail, and the thickets would be ransacked.

By venturing upon so bold a measure as that of scaling the rugged steep in front of them, much time might be gained.

His plans were well laid, but destined to be unsuccessful; for scarcely had they commenced ascending, when a shrill whoop rose from the woods behind them.

“What was that?” said Adherbal. “Could it be the Ingen that Mr. Arden had a tussle with?”

“No,” replied Norton; “he has not gained breath enough yet. It was, however, too loud

a cry for our good ; some straggler may have found him."

" So much for mercy !" muttered Shelton. " The fellow that Mr. Arden spared will put others on our track."

" No fear of that," replied Adherbal : " he was too far gone. I'll bet a horn of powder he sees rainbows yet."

" You may bet," snarled Shelton, " but how will you *prove* it ?"

" Why, I'll do what no one else would," retorted Adherbal ; " I'll take *your* word for it ; you may go and see."

An angry reply would have been returned by Shelton, had not Adherbal turned his back on him and pushed forward.

The Konzas and the white men now struck into a narrow rift resembling a pathway, and followed it until it broke off abruptly. They then commenced scrambling up the rough sides of the rock, sometimes supporting themselves by the strength of their arms alone,

until they at length succeeded in attaining a platform of rock far above the bushes.

“A rough road this,” said Norton, who had assisted Mr. Wilford up.

“I’ve seed smother ones,” answered Adherbal, looking down the precipitous path, “and them that didn’t bother my wind so much.”

An exclamation burst from one of the Konzas, who stood on the edge of the rock, pointing to the grove below. A stream of Indians were pouring through the woods, following the very path they had taken. The eye of the Black Wolf darkened, but he said nothing.

“They’re coming as straight as a bee could line it,” muttered Adherbal. “See that big fellow! he’s pointing out a broken bush. An Ingen climbs wonderful fast,” said he, looking at the rocks. “We had better be on the move.”

The Konza chief was apparently of the same opinion; for, making a single gesture to his men, they renewed their arduous journey.

CHAPTER XIV.

There now, lean on me.

Place your foot here ; here, take this staff, and cling

A moment to that shrub. Now give me your hand,

And hold fast my girdle—softly—well :

The chalet will be gained within an hour—

Come on—we'll quickly find sure footing.

Manfred.

THE spot where the party had halted was a partial hollow of the rock, and was by that means thrown into shade.

Before starting, each slung his rifle to his back by means of a broad band. Their course lay at times over fragments of stone, which had fallen in large masses from above.

At others, they were obliged to climb the face of the rock, taking advantage of any little prominence for a foothold or a grasping-place. In some places even these were wanting; and a stunted bush, or the jagged root of some dwarf shrub, afforded a precarious hold. To add to their peril, the soft but powerful light of the moon poured upon the cliff, rendering visible every bush and shrub, and every fissure that time had riven in the face of the stern rock; and a single upward glance of the eye would reveal them to the enemy beneath.

They had not proceeded far, when a whoop announced that a savage had his eye on them. A momentary pause followed; then yell swelled upon yell until the grove beneath them howled. It was not the shout of a small band, but the mingled roar of hundreds. They were answered by the Konza war-cry. The next instant a crowd of dusky figures darted towards the base of the rocks, while

the ringing yells told that the woods were yet swarming. They sped up the rugged steep; springing like winged creatures from cleft to cleft, and catching with unfailing accuracy at every thing that might aid their course.

“Push on!” said Rifton, as he cast a look below, but without pausing. “A quick eye and nervous arm are of much service now. That tall fellow leaps like a goat. I shall have to stop him, if he gain on us much more. Push on, Shelton; you are stopping my path!”

“If you want to travel faster, you may choose another,” replied Shelton in a surly tone: “I sha’n’t hurry, if I’m shot for it.”

“As you like,” said Rifton; “I don’t feel so easy about the matter, so I’ll even follow your advice—though it might have been given in a more friendly way.”

They soon reached another level of rock, and, spite of their danger, paused from mere

exhaustion. All took advantage of the moment to cast a glance down the steep. The whole base and side of the rock were swarming with pursuers, who crawled up it like ants; and far in advance of all was the Indian who had drawn forth the remark of Rifton. He was within fifty yards of them, and full a hundred feet in front of his comrades.

"I reckon I'll have to put a bullet into that fellow," said Rifton, unslinging his rifle. "He's coming too near."

He stepped to the edge of the rock to execute his intention, and had raised his gun to his cheek, when the muzzle of the weapon was put up by the Black Wolf. He pointed to a huge loose fragment of rock, and at the same time speaking a few words in his own language, several Indians stepped forward and united their strength to topple it upon the savage, for whom there was apparently no escape, as he was in a narrow kind of path with a precipice on each side. The

rock was enormous ; nor was it until nearly a dozen had united their force that it began to yield. As it commenced its descent, the Indian glanced his eye upward, and comprehending his danger in an instant, made a desperate leap from the pathway, and caught at a small bush growing on one side, over the abyss. The heavy fragment brushed past him, and striking a jutting point of rock, shivered into pieces, which bounded in every direction, barely missing several savages below.

The attention of all was now called to him for whose destruction it had been more peculiarly intended. He was clinging with the tenacity of despair to the tough branches of the shrub. His situation was fearful. The rock beneath was smooth ; there was no foothold, nor the slightest irregularity to form a support. Directly below him was a perpendicular descent of nearly a hundred feet. In vain he exerted the strength of his arms to

draw up his body; there was nothing to clutch at, nor was there any means of reaching the path he had forsaken. His hopeless situation enchained the attention of either band, and both stood motionless, watching the result with the same feeling of intense yet horrible interest.

He soon grew faint from exertion. He dashed his moccasined foot violently against the smooth rock, and cast a long look upon the sharp stones that must receive him when he fell; then threw a wild glance upward, towards his foes. At length, conscious that his exertions only tended to exhaust his strength, he ceased his efforts, and hung at the full stretch of his arms. He continued thus for a few moments silent and motionless. Then came another effort. His body swung round, his arms were twisted one across the other, and his back rested against the rock. For a moment, all was hushed; then followed a piercing cry. Relaxing the grasp of one

hand, he clutched it forward ; the bush slipped from him, and his giant form was seen cutting the air. The next moment, the moon shone upon a mass of gore !

The Konzas gave a yell of exultation ; for in his fate they regarded only the destruction of an enemy.

“ It’s all over,” said Norton, drawing a long breath, and looking towards the black object around which a crowd of Indians had collected. “ It is a dreadful death !”

With a convulsive effort Arden drew himself up, and the words “ Horrible ! horrible !” escaped through his clenched teeth. Shelton heard it, and drew near him.

“ Ay ! *horrid* indeed, Mr. Arden,” said he ; “ I never witnessed but one scene like it. You may remember it ; but I believe it is not pleasing to you, so I’ll say no more.” As he spoke, a bitter sneer played over his face, and he turned to follow the Indians, who had already begun to ascend the rock.

Before he had moved a yard, his arm was griped by Arden, who dragged him to him. The moon shone full upon his face, which was pale as that of the dead; his eye seemed to emit sparks of fire, and there was a bloody mark on his lip where he had bitten it in the agony of his feelings. For a moment he held the quailing wretch in front of him while he fixed his steady gaze on his eyes.

“Robert Shelton,” said he in a low tone, but startling from its clearness,—“Robert Shelton, listen to my words! for, by all the powers of heaven, what I *now* say, I will fulfil to the uttermost. *Twice* this night have you taunted me with the commission of a crime, the remembrance of which makes my blood run cold. *Beware of the third time!* If a word relating to *that* escape your lips—if you dare even to *breathe* the name of the wretched being who fell a victim to my fury—you shall die—by *my* hand you shall die. Even though the Pawnees were at my

heels, with their arrows pointed, with their tomahawks raised, even then would I send you to account for your crimes, before I paid the retribution due to mine. I have spoken for the last time. Beware!" As he finished, he loosened his hold, and followed the rest of the band.

For a short time the pursuers hovered in silence round their dead companion, apparently disheartened by his fate. But the pause was only the portentous silence that precedes the bursting of the tempest. A whoop arose from them, and in another moment they were continuing the chase.

The upper portion of the cliff was extremely arduous to mount, and before the whites had reached it, about thirty of their enemies gained the ledge from which they had witnessed the destruction of the Pawnee. Here they consulted for a few moments, and several drew their bows from their buffalo cases and commenced a dis-

charge of arrows, while the others continued the pursuit. The fugitives were now within a short distance of the summit. The arrows pattered around them, and several struck them, but their thick clothing protected them from the shafts.

“ ’Tis a long shot,” said Adherbal, as he drew himself over the verge of the cliff. “ Our escaping them arrows is uncommon lucky.”

“ Now for a race !” said a hunter, tightening his belt, and making a spring forward.

“ Stop ! stop !” said Adherbal : “ we have a little time to spare. Let’s send them another piece of rock to amuse themselves with. Here, this will do. Then we will start.”

It was no sooner hinted than executed. The fragment, yielding to the straining efforts of four men, slid heavily to the brink, and, balancing for a moment, disappeared.

A loud scream of several voices followed.

The fugitives paused not to ascertain the mischief they had caused, but continued their flight along the level crest of the rocks.

CHAPTER XV.

Scarcely could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon point they close—
They close in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword sway and with lance's thrust.

SCOTT.

NOTWITHSTANDING the alacrity with which preparations were made by the trappers to aid the party in distress, the distance was so great, that night had set in and the moon had risen when they entered a strip of forest at the base of the cliffs, a number of miles distant from their place of destination.

“ I like not this travelling through forests,”

said Wharton to Hasbrook: "they are favourable to ambuscades, and but that we are too powerful to fear a war-party, I would not do it. This Konza, however," said he, pointing to Wahcourah, who guided them, "has a ready eye and a quick ear, and seems to keep both busy."

As he spoke, the Indian, as if to verify the assertion, stopped short and bent his head forward to listen; then motioning them to stop, he darted off into the woods.

"Follow him, Hasbrook!" said Wharton, "and see that he does not play us false."

"Ay, ay!" replied the sturdy woodsman; "if there's danger, come what may, you shall hear my rifle."

As he spoke, he struck off in the direction taken by the Konza; and Wharton, pausing under a tree, anxiously awaited his return. Scarcely had he taken his stand, when a trapper joined him. "Captain! I heard a strange cry from the top of the cliffs yonder," said he,

pointing in the direction taken by Hasbrook and the Indian.

“Wolves, man! wolves!”

“It may be; but there are those who don’t think so.”

“Ha! who?”

“Harris, Wilkes, and Barnes,” said the other, naming several of the oldest trappers.

“Ha! If *they* doubt, there is reason for it.”

His remark was cut short by the faint report of a rifle.

“There goes Hasbrook,” said he.

“No!” said the trapper; “’twas on the top of the cliff.—There! there goes Hasbrook, or the Konza,” said he, as the report of a second and nearer rifle rang through the woods.

“On! on!” cried Wharton; “that first report came from the weapon of a Konza or

white man; they may be standing out for their lives."

With a swiftness bordering on a race they dashed off. Hasbrook was heard hailing them at a distance. "Hilloah!" shouted Wharton, "what's to pay?"

"The devil's to pay!" was the bellowed answer. "Come this way; here's a path up the cliff."

No sooner was the response given, than they quickened their speed to a run. They had just reached the pathway, when a figure was seen darting down with reckless haste.

"Hasbrook!" shouted Wharton, "what have you seen?"

A strange voice answered — "Come up the rocks—and quickly. A party of white men and Konzas are beset by half the Pawnee village."

As he spoke, he turned and commenced re-ascending. A loud roar burst from the trap-

pers as they followed, and was answered by a yell from above.

“They muster strong,” exclaimed Wharton; “we shall have warm work.”

The place up which they were forcing their way, and which has been dignified with the title of “path,” was a gradual ascent over stones and rough fragments of rock, but wide enough to admit of eight or ten men abreast.

The report of rifles far above showed them the position of those they sought.

“Give a huzza!” said Wharton, “to let them know we are near. A man fights desperately when he expects succour.”

A loud shout from the band followed.

“No! no! that sounds too savage. They might mistake it for an Indian yell: give them a *huzza*!”

Again the huzza of the band swelled in the air, and the cliffs re-echoed it, until it seemed that a thousand voices were united in the

shout. A faint huzza was heard from above, but was drowned by a yell from the same quarter; showing that the cry had reached other ears than those for whose encouragement it was intended.

“What’s that?” said Wharton, pointing to a dim object resting upon a crag at a short distance.

“Shall I drill a hole through it?” said a trapper, stepping forward and raising his rifle.

“Stop, Bruen! you are ever too ready with your gun. It may be the person who just hailed us; I have lost sight of him.”

A few steps brought them to the individual in question. He was seated, supporting his back against a fragment of rock.

“I’m glad you’re come,” said he faintly. “But hurry up—the path is clear. I would lead you, but I am wounded; I have—lost blood—lost blood,—I am very weak.”

“Where are the rest?” demanded Wharton.

“Fighting from behind the rocks near the top of the pathway.”

“Why did you leave them?”

“Norton saw you as you came through the woods, and sent me to head you. I should be of no use, seeing I couldn't pull a trigger;—look here.”

As he spoke, he raised his hand, which was mutilated and clotted with blood.

“Three arrows struck in at the same time,” said he, dropping it faintly to his side; “my body is *clean* covered with arrow-heads.”

While this conversation was going on, most of the troop kept on, lest a minute should be lost.

Wharton paused over the wounded Ranger, then calling two trappers, ordered them to assist him down the pathway and look to his wounds. Without listening to the remonstrance which he was aware would follow, he

turned off, and was soon at the head of his band. The moon shone full on them as they laboured along, panting and straining, and several of them beginning to flag.

“Courage! courage!” cried Wharton; “we are near the summit.”

Just then the report of a rifle rattled over the cliffs.

The sound of the gun and the words of their leader had great effect in encouraging the men, and in a few moments they were at the top of the pathway. Wharton was at their head. An entire change had come over him; the calm had passed away and given place to high excitement, and his voice sounded like a clarion-call as he cheered his men onward.

A band of armed Indians met them at the top of the steep. The battle was hand to hand.

In front of the Indians was the Hawk Chief, armed with his war-club, and making destruc-

tive work among the trappers. All shrank from collision with the young chieftain, whose every blow sped a life.

Notwithstanding his exertions, however, the Indians began to give ground; and the Rangers, led on by Arden, at that moment attacked them from another quarter. After a slight attempt at resistance, the Pawnees became panic-stricken, and scattered in flight.

The attention of Wharton happened, in the midst of the turmoil, to be attracted to Shelton, who was following where a feeble fight was still kept up. In his hand he wielded an enormous stone-headed tomahawk. His head and neck were smeared with blood. It might have been that of his enemies, or it might have flowed from his own veins. But if so, it had not abated his thirst of blood, or the iron force of his arm. Three blows had crushed three Indians; before him stood a fourth. His hair was silvered, and he was unarmed, but he

quailed not. Shelton laughed exultingly as he swung his weapon aloft. The arm was descending, when it was arrested by Wharton.

“Slay not the aged and unarmed!” said he.

“This is no time to spare,” said Shelton; “blood now! I never asked mercy for myself; when my own time comes——”

An arrow whizzed from a bow crushed through the bone of his skull, and sank deep into the brain; his weapon fell from his grasp, and he sank without a groan upon the rock. *His time had come!*

The fury of the battle was now over; the closing scene was one of murder. The Pawnees fled; the Konzas and the trappers followed. In vain Wharton exerted himself to recall them, and to stop the bloodshed. In vain he flew from one quarter to another, using not only his authority, but the strength of his arm, in arresting the course of some sanguinary trapper. The noise of pursuit

swept on, and the work of slaughter continued, until the forms both of fugitives and pursuers were lost to the eye, and the din of warfare died away in distance.

CHAPTER XVI.

Look to your speech, my trusty friend. Keep a rein on your tongue. For an angry word once uttered, like the winged arrow, carries a barb, and when sped cannot be recalled.

THE sun rose in cloudless glory on the morning succeeding the battle of the cliffs. It rose upon a scene of death. Many who had witnessed its setting were now lying stiff and stark upon the rocks. Gaunt prairie wolves, attracted by the smell of carnage, were hovering about, or peering from behind fragments of rock ; and others were seen in the distance, making for the spot. Here and there a knot were tearing the body of some Indian, who had been shot in flight, and had fallen at a distance from the rest. Clouds of carrion-

birds were circling in the air over the field of slaughter.

Wharton, immediately after the battle, had caused the wounded to be conveyed to the forest below, where more attention could be paid to their comfort.

A few Konzas remained on the field of battle, and here and there one might be seen tearing scalps from the slain. Most of them, however, had followed in pursuit of the vanquished enemy, and had not yet returned.

About forty trappers and a few Rangers remained. They had collected the bodies of their comrades, and had composed them, previous to their burial, as well as they were able. The deep brand of passion had passed from the rugged features of many of the slain. The dark and convulsed countenances of others denoted that fierce feelings had been cut short by a violent end.

There was silence among those who sat round the dead. They were sad, but there

was sternness mingled with it: the first feeling arose from the loss of friends, the second from the knowledge that they had not fallen unavenged. Arden and Adherbal were among the group. The last was gazing calmly and abstractedly upon the scene. Although he had been acquainted with many of those killed, he had not been so intimate as to cause any poignant sorrow. He was indulging in general, though serious reflections.

“Even a brute,” said he half musingly, as he looked at several wolves gathered round the distant body of an Indian,—“Even a brute can tell when the spirit is gone. Yesterday them beasts would have fled from yon Ingen, to-day they are his masters.”

His remarks might have extended further, had not the current of his thoughts been diverted by the appearance of several individuals at the head of the pathway, bearing different implements for burying the dead.

In an hour the sad work was completed, and firing a volley over the rude graves of their companions, the troop set out to join their comrades below.

As they crossed a small piece of woodland at the foot of the cliffs, and had a wide view of the prairie, they paused. In the far distance a dim haze of smoke was hanging in the sky, denoting the site of the Pawnee town.

"Yonder is the village," said Arden.

No reply was made to his remark.

"It is but three miles off," continued he; "a short march—they are dispirited by defeat. We are forty whites; shall we crush this brood of snakes?"

The men hesitated.

"They muster a thousand fighting Indians," said one.

"Half of them are dead, the other half wounded," replied Arden.

"But the Hawk Chief is alive," said another.

"Cowed by an Indian boy!" answered Arden with a sneer.

"Yet I reckon that boy is not to be trifled with," said Adherbal, who had listened with an air of disapprobation to the proposal.

"Ha! Adherbal, will you not accompany us?" said Arden.

"No! I have no further grudge agin the Pawnees. There's room enough in the world for them and me."

"They burnt Weazen at the stake," said Arden.

"I'm sorry for it : it was his bad luck."

"Will you not assist in avenging him?"

"He has been avenged," said Adherbal.

"There are at least a hundred Ingens lying dead on yon cliff. Every wolf may have a body to himself. Years will not fill up the gap made in a single night. I will not go : it's agin my conscience."

"I verily believe, Adherbal," said Arden,

“that fear has more to do with this matter than conscience.”

“Go your ways, young man,” replied Adherbal; “I vally your belief monstrous little. Kill every man, woman, and child in the town, if it suits you, and if you can; I’ll have no hand in the matter. I reckon, too, you’ll meet more knives and arrows than will set well on your digestion. Mighty few of you will come back to crow over yon tribe.”

Arden laughed scornfully at the prophecy.

“Laugh on!” replied Adherbal; “laugh when you may. From what I seed last evening, when you fo’t the Ingen in the timber, I reckon your conscience don’t always leave you in a mood for it.”

Arden turned pale. His eyes blazed with fury.

“Adherbal,” said he in a husky tone, “no more of that, or by——”

“Don’t threaten *me*,” interrupted Adherbal: “I’m not to be silenced by loud words.

I don't want to gall, or fret you. If what you have done troubles you, more blood will not set easier on your mind. Take away your hand!" said he, brushing off the arm that rested on his shoulder. "Should we grapple, I could snap your bones like straws.—I have done. Take your own course."

Arden made no reply, but, calming his feelings, addressed a few words to the band, pointing out the favourable occasion for attacking the town, and making light of the fears of Adherbal.

With the trappers, however, they had more weight. They knew that in courage he was not deficient; Arden's manner grated on their feelings. In woodcraft and Indian warfare Adherbal stood unequalled; and when they saw him standing aloof, their ardour chilled, and one and all refused to set out on so wild an expedition. The taunts and entreaties of Arden were alike disregarded.

Whilst the excitement was highest, Whar-

ten left the grove of the encampment and advanced towards them. When he came up, his eye rested for a moment on the features of several of his band. He guessed by their looks, and by the excited and half-angry appearance of Arden, that something was wrong, and before long was informed of the cause.

His brow knit into a deep frown as he listened; and when he had heard all, he turned calmly to the young officer:

“Mr. Arden,” said he, “the trappers are under my control—the Rangers are under yours. Neither must interfere with the concerns of the other. In attacking the Pawnee town, nothing is to be gained, and many lives may be lost. It is a step to which I cannot consent, for I feel partially responsible for the life of every man under my charge. I have, besides, a drove of mules laden with valuable effects.”

Arden replied sneeringly, “Prudence is a mantle that easily covers the fears of a

faint heart. Should the courage of Captain Wharton and his *gang* be weighed together, I know not which would kick the beam."

The bronzed features of Wharton grew darker, but the flush of anger passed, and, without replying to Arden, he said to his men :

" You have heard my orders ; yonder is the camp."

But though Wharton took the matter thus quietly, his followers did not, and the taunt aimed at their leader touched them more nearly than if uttered against themselves. Fierce murmurs ran from mouth to mouth. At length a voice cried out, " Cut down the upstart !" and one or two guns bristled above the crowd of heads.

" Ha ! is it so ?" said Arden sternly ; " stand back, Rangers, and cock your guns. Shoot the first that levels his piece."

The soldiers obeyed, and stood in hostile readiness, a small but hardy group.

Their determined attitude aroused no other feeling than that of decision in their grim opponents, too much in the habit of warring with Indians, where the odds were fearfully against them, to heed so scanty a band. Stern threats were muttered, and blades were brandished.

"Hold!" shouted Captain Wharton in a ringing tone that silenced all; and striding before his excited followers, he fixed his eye on Bruen, who appeared most active.

"Am I captain of my band?" said he. "Three times have I spoken unheeded. What means all this?" He paused, and his searching eye went from face to face. "Put up your arms," said he; "you must not sacrifice the lives of these Rangers for the words of a petulant boy. Were they worthy of notice, I need not your assistance to treat them as they merit."

The calmness of Wharton stung Arden to the quick. Starting furiously forward, he felt himself arrested from behind.

“Keep cool!” said a voice in his ear. “Remember that Captain Wharton saved your life when you was situated dreadful awkward.”

“Better have lost it,” replied Arden bitterly, “than brook these insults.”

“*Who* began the work?” said Adherbal. “*Who* started first on that track? answer me that. *Who* called *me* coward, and several other things of that natur? Howsomdever, I don’t vally what a man says when he’s in a passion, because I’m often that way myself. Keep cool! keep cool—if not for your own sake, for the sake of your men. If you do not, the weight of their blood is on your head.”

A shudder passed over Arden as Adherbal uttered the last sentence. He stood irresolute, fearful of involving his men with the trappers, and equally unwilling to submit quietly to the insults his own imprudence had drawn on him. Wharton observed the internal struggle.

"Mr. Arden," said he, "I know what are your present feelings; forgive me for having given rise to them. I was over hasty, and in my angry mood expressions have escaped which I am aware should not have been uttered by me, and were inapplicable to you."

As he spoke, he extended his hand. Arden grasped it warmly, and tears gushed to his eyes.

"Captain Wharton," said he in a low tone, "I thank you for your generosity in thus saving me from the lowest of all humiliations—humiliation in the eyes of inferiors under my command. I will remember this; and should ever occasion offer for a reciprocation of kindness, you may depend upon Frank Arden."

Notwithstanding the frankness of his tones, there was a sadness in them which showed that the bitterness of the sting was not entirely removed.

He turned to his men, and ordering them to put up their arms, slowly followed them to the encampment.

Wharton watched him till he disappeared. "I did not know the depth of the wound I gave," said he: "every one has his weak points, and this man has a heavy conscience. —To your camp, men! to your camp!" said he, breaking off suddenly. "This will be a busy day with you." Then turning to Adherbal, "My old friend, I thank you for having prevented this hare-brained expedition, which must have resulted in the destruction of those engaged in it, or must have involved my whole band."

"Any one might have seen that with half an eye," replied Adherbal. "I like not the Pawnees more than Mr. Arden, but we have done them harm enough already. Besides, one of my maxims is, 'never to shed blood on necessary.' If an Ingen sends an arrow after

me, then I kill him ; but I never go out of my path to look for him. It isn't moral."

Wharton smiled at the old man's idea of morality, and followed his troop to the camp.

CHAPTER XVII.

As monumental bronze, unchanged his look.

* * * * *
Trained, from his tree-rock'd cradle to his bier,
The fierce extremes of good and ill to brook—
Impassive—fearing but the shame of fear ;
A stoic of the woods—a man without a tear.

CAMPBELL.

SCARCELY had Adherbal followed the leader to the grove, when the attention of several was attracted to a single Pawnee flying at full speed across the prairie, with a Konza in pursuit.

“ ’Tis time to think of mercy,” said Wharton. “ That Pawnee must be saved. He’s making for the grove: remember,” said he, raising his voice, “ yon Indian goes free.”

The savage, in the mean time, apparently not aware that the forest contained enemies, directed his flight towards it. Adherbal watched him with much dissatisfaction.

"A rank coward," said he: "I never seed an Ingen act like that before. He doesn't even look behind; howsomdever, he gets over the ground dreadful fast. A good leap!"

This last remark was elicited by seeing the fugitive clear, at a single bound, a wide run of water that meandered through a piece of low ground in the prairie. "If he holds out three minutes longer, he is safe."

The Konza gained upon him. He was within but a short distance of the whites, when he caught sight of them. Instead of changing his course, as might have been expected, he uttered a shout, and fled directly towards them. He reached the grove, and sank breathless at the feet of Arden, just as the Konza came up.

To the surprise of all, he cried out in Eng-

lish, "Save me, Mr. Arden, save me from those savages!"

"Ha! whom have we hear?" exclaimed Arden, taking him by the scalp-lock and putting back his head. He examined the features long and narrowly; at length he half uttered as he gave up the task, "He has the advantage of me; I never saw him."

The remark caught the ear of the fugitive, who replied, "You are wrong, sir: I am Weazen!"

"Weazen?"

"Cabbage! as I live!" said Adherbal. "Paint alters a person monstrous. I supposed that the Pawnees had made an end of him long ago, or I might have had an idee of the truth from the way he handled his legs. He's an awful sneak!"

The story of Weazen was soon told. After having been dragged off by the swarthy dame who saved him from torture, he had been introduced in her lodge as her future lord and

master. From his account, she was a sturdy, stalworth body, who took charge of family matters, without troubling herself about the opinion of her husband.

When Weazen had entered his new abode, immediate steps were taken to convert him into a savage: his crown was shaven, with the exception of the scalp-lock, and he was smeared from head to foot with red ochre. After this, he was striped with various coloured paint. The totem of the Pawnee tribe was tattooed upon his breast, and, last of all, the name of the "Prairie Hen" was given to him by an old warrior, to the great annoyance of his bellicose wife. *He*, however, bore it with the most philosophic fortitude. Whilst this ceremony was going on, he learned that the alarm given was on account of the escape of the whites.

Amid the general rush to arms, Weazen was ordered by his better half to join in pursuit of the fugitives; and upon his declining the

proposal, his shoulders were annoyed by the hearty application of a cudgel. This discipline was kept up during the whole day, to the great inflammation of his temper and his hide.

In fine, he began to conclude, from the little foretaste with which he had been favoured, that his conjugal state was not likely to be one of perfect bliss; and he soon settled, to his own entire satisfaction, that the quiet Mrs. Weazen, whom he had espoused in the settlements, was far preferable to the shrewish Mrs. Weazen who had espoused him in the Pawnee village. He determined, therefore, to escape forthwith.

From the runners that came in he heard vague accounts of the fight on the cliffs, and taking advantage of the confusion occasioned in the town, had been able to steal off from his squaw, and, aided by his disguise, was stopped by no one until spied by the Konza, who had pursued him for a Pawnee. The rest is known.

By the aid of water, Weasen was soon restored to his natural colour. The Pawnee totem, however, was indelible. More civilized habiliments were furnished him. A woollen nightcap concealed the despoliation which his head had suffered, and he met with warm congratulations from all.

From the hour of victory most of the Konzas had been absent. They had joined in the pursuit of the flying Pawnees. It was late in the morning when they came dropping in, all more or less ornamented with reeking trophies of success. The trappers were scattered through the woodland; some talking over the adventures of the past fight, some dressing their wounds, and others, completely exhausted by the sanguinary labours of the night, were buried in deep slumber. A few were stationed here and there with their guns, keeping an eye over the forest glades and the adjacent prairie.

Side by side, upon a dead log, sat Norton

and Rifton, each engaged in cleaning, the one his rifle, and the other his yager, after the night's service.

"This should be done often," said Rifton, as he carefully greased the lock of a long and rather *used* rifle. "A foul gun always carries *wild*."

"In shooting at a mark," replied Norton, "where I have my own time, and am anxious about the matter, I use the wiping-rod between each shot; though in hunting I sometimes pass over half-a-dozen without doing it. But when we come to a skirmish, then of course one has not time to think of that. Adherbal might stop to do it, for he's unlike any one I ever knew. In battle he's as cool as an icicle; and out of it, as hot as mustard. Have you any *patches*? It would be as well to load, for it is not safe here with an uncharged weapon."

Rifton drew from his pouch a roll of buckskin, from which Norton cut a long strip.

Then touching a spring, a small box filled with grease was revealed in the breech of his gun ; from which, by inserting the end of his finger, he drew a small quantity, which he spread carefully over the leather. This done, he placed a small patch of buckskin over the muzzle of his rifle, and placing a ball upon it, forced them together into the aperture.

“ I like a snug patch,” said he, as he rammed his bullet down with main force. “ A superfluous piece of leather may change the course of a ball. When I have sent my bullet *home*, too, I never give another blow of the rod. It batters the lead, and prevents its going true.”

“ That ’s my way,” replied Rifton ; “ but there are those who drive their lead down until the rod leaps from the muzzle. They wet their patches, too, instead of greasing them ; and then, because they go down hard, they think they fit snugger. Their doc-

trine's bad. Ha ! yonder comes the Konza Wolf at last."

As he spoke, he pointed down a vista in the forest. At the far end of it the red blanket of the Konza chieftain was seen fluttering among the shrubbery as he rapidly advanced. Behind followed half-a-dozen Indians, like himself, just returned from the carnage. There was a look of triumph in the eye of the Wolf, far different from his usual calm demeanour ; and the moment that he appeared among his band, he uttered a triumphant whoop that made the woods echo. His warriors sprang to their feet and gathered round him ; then, as he pronounced a single word, darted off towards those who were approaching. The cause of this movement was soon explained, for in the midst of the group was a single Indian in the garb of a Pawnee. He was perfectly unarmed ; but he walked proudly amid his foes, evincing no trace of concern. Their yells, replete with

ferocity, produced no change; his features were cold, his eyes unmoved and unquailing.

“The Hawk Chief!” exclaimed Norton, as he caught sight of the captured warrior.
“The arch fiend is taken at last.

Upon hearing these words, half-a-dozen trappers sprang to their feet, and rushed forward to get a view of the fierce warrior, whose prowess had been displayed so much to their own detriment. Several grasped their rifles.

Whatever might have been the feelings of the Pawnee Chief, he drew his tall figure more proudly up, and the look of his glowing eyes grew perhaps more daring as he saw himself thus encircled by enemies.

After regarding him for a short time, the Black Wolf glided in front of him, and stood at full height, with every muscle of his frame

expanded, and every fibre swelling, as if to measure himself with his rival.

“The hawk,” said he, alluding to his name, “pounced upon the pale face; but he met the wolf; and the wolf has his paw on him.”

The Pawnee made no reply to the taunt, and regarded him with a cold but scornful eye. Whether the Konza expected this, or whether he experienced a feeling of disappointment, it was impossible to divine, for his features were as calm as those of his captive. But after a moment, he again spoke.

“The Pawnee,” said he deridingly, “is the buffalo of the Konza, and the Konza hunts him. He leaves his body to the wolves and ravens, and the squaws play with his scalp.”

After pausing for a moment, as if in doubt whether the taunt merited reply, the Hawk Chief turned and said coolly :—

“ A dog may bark at a panther when he has lost his teeth and claws. The Konza is a dog. Go !”

The black eye of the Wolf Chief sparkled with anger ; but he was too well schooled to let word or action betray his emotion, and he replied with calmness :—

“ ’Tis well the Pawnee has a loud voice, he will sing his death-song the better ; let him commence it, for a stake is waiting for him. When the sun rises, there will be a wail in the Pawnee village, and the wolves will howl over the body of Sharatack.”

This annunciation of his intended fate produced no change in the proud Pawnee, and he replied in the same indifferent manner as before :—

“ Sharatack has lived a warrior, he will die one ; his knife has been red with Konza blood ; their scalps are hanging in the smoke of his lodge, and their bones are whitening on the

prairies. It is enough; Sharatack laughs at the Konza."

The bold bearing of the Hawk Chief seemed to produce some effect even upon his wild enemy, and his words of derision changed to those of admiration, but not of pardon.

"Sharatack has spoken well," said he: "he is a warrior; but he has shed Konza blood, and he must die."

The Hawk Chief, as he uttered his last words, sank carelessly against a tree, and turned a vacant eye in another direction, with the air of one perfectly indifferent to what the other might utter. The change in the manner of the Konza produced no alteration in his countenance.

After watching him for a moment, the Black Wolf turned away, and motioning several of his oldest warriors to follow him, advanced towards a large tree, where he

seated himself. There was an expression of grave sternness in the features of the savages, as they seated themselves around him, indicating that a matter of weight was then under consideration. The frequent glances cast towards the prisoner showed that he was deeply involved in the subject.

In the mean time, the attention of the whites and a number of Indians was attracted to the prairie. A distant object was seen, at first thought to be a mounted warrior, but on nearer approach was discovered to be Nah-tourah, the Indian maid, mounted upon her black courser. The proud beast bore on his dauntless rider at full gallop until within a short distance of the camp, when a sudden motion of the rein checked him in his career. With ears pricked up, his fiery eye glowing, and his long forelock and mane hanging over them, and snorting nostril and planted feet, the half wild brute regarded the group in the

grove, ready to fly at the slightest sign of his rider.

The girl seemed to feel that she had claims upon the whites ; but she saw the dusky forms of the Konzas, who were watching her with hostile eyes. After viewing them, she struck her horse into a sharp trot, and commenced riding to and fro parallel to the camp, as if anxious yet hesitating to approach. Upon Norton's advancing, however, and making a sign to her, she turned her horse ; but scarcely was she within a hundred yards of the camp, when the report of a rifle rung through the air, and a bullet whistled past her. At the same time a Konza sprang out brandishing his weapon, but was arrested by Norton.

“ The Pawnee,” said the Indian, “ is the enemy of the Konza.”

“ Ay ! but she is a woman,” replied Norton.

“ A woman bears warriors,” answered the Konza : “ but, it is enough, she is the friend of the white man—she is safe.” As he spoke, he withdrew into the woods ; and the girl, seeing no other movement to molest her, galloped into the camp.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The maid alone
Conspicuous on a coal black courser meets
The war—
The foaming courser, of her guiding hand
Impatient, smote the earth, and toss'd his mane,
And rear'd aloft, with many a froward bound,—
Then answer'd to the rein with such a step,
As in submission he were bound to show
His unsubdued strength.

Joan of Arc.

IMMEDIATELY upon entering the camp, Nahtourah galloped to Norton; for the greeting already received warned her that the red allies of the whites were not to be trusted.

Notwithstanding the cordiality with which she was welcomed by the hunters, and by Adherbal in particular, there were lowering brows among the trappers, and the savage looks of many rivalled that of the dusky horde around them. Several Konzas, too, had their hands on their triggers.

After scanning the group for a moment, the girl spoke, and there was sadness in her tones.

“There is a wail in the Pawnee village,” said she mournfully.

“’Tis too true,” said Adherbal, shaking his head. “We have made sad work with them Pawnees; but we did it in self-defence; we were in extremity: even a fox will battle for its life.”

“Nahtourah,” said the girl, “hears the wail of the women, and her heart is heavy. The old warriors tremble, but the young ones have blood in their thoughts. Sharatack will avenge the dead.”

“ He can’t do it convenient,” replied Adherbal, “ seeing that he is a prisoner, and there is some talk of burning him at the stake. That ’s what them *gang* of Konzas is powwow-ing about.”

He spoke in English ; but he pointed first towards the Hawk Chief, who was leaning against a tree, while two Konzas kept watch at his side with loaded rifles ; then to the council who were settling his fate.

The glance of the Pawnee girl was searching as that of an eagle and a wild cry of dismay followed her recognition of the captive.

Turning to Adherbal, she spoke in a hurried voice : — “ The white man,” said she, “ will save the Pawnee Chief. He will raise his voice in the Konza council, and Sharatack will live.”

Adherbal hesitated ; he knew the terror inspired by the warrior now in their power, and he feared that intercession would be un-

availing. The girl noticed his embarrassment, and to enforce her claims she said :

“The pale faces were bound, the stake was ready, when Nahtourah cut their bonds ; she saved the pale faces—she asks the life of Sharatack.”

“Saved them !” said Wharton, in the Pawnee language, in which he was well versed : “where is the white girl ? You tore her from her friends. Where is she now ?”

The eye of Nahtourah drooped as she faintly acknowledged that Lucy and Herrick were both prisoners in the Pawnee town.

“Then back to your tribe,” replied Wharton sternly. “As yet I have been the advocate of mercy ; but should that young girl be harmed, I will slay every Indian and raze every lodge in the town.”

Nahtourah fixed her eye on his as he finished : — “Will the pale face save Sharatack ?” demanded she.

“No !” replied Wharton sternly, “never !”

Nahtourah waited to hear no more. She sprang upon her horse. With four bounds of the steed she was at the side of Sharatack. She wrenched the rifle from one of the astounded guards, and with two blows left him and his comrade senseless.

The next moment she sped off, with Sharatack mounted behind her. The woods rang with the fierce whoops of the Konzas as she accomplished this bold manœuvre. The council broke up, the reports of rifles rattled among the trees, and a score of bullets whistled past the flying pair, but without harming them. Just as they had gained the edge of the prairie, and had an open plain before them, where the great speed of their horse would have rendered escape almost certain, a single rifle-crack was heard, followed by a solitary whoop. The noble steed uttered a loud cry, between a neigh and a yell, and rearing upright, fell backward on the sward.

The girl and the warrior exerted themselves to bring him to his feet. But he rolled over on his side: the proud brute was dead.

Escape was now impracticable; in a moment they were surrounded.

Several Kanzas seized Sharstock, who seeing all prospect of escape vanished, yielded himself with the same calmness that he had previously evinced.

"Where is the squaw?" exclaimed a voice from without the ring. "Kill her! It was she that set the Indian free!"

As he uttered the words, Bruen the trapper forced his way through the crowd, and would have executed his sanguinary purpose had not Adherbal anticipated him. Springing forward, he placed himself in front of the girl, and cocked his rifle.

"Fair play, Bruen!" shouted he. "'Twas a bold deed, well planned and daringly done. The gal, though she be an Ingen, saved my

life, and I'll stand up for her as long as I can pull a trigger. It would be distressing painful to me to let the life out of a white man; but, nevertheless, whoever touches that gal, touches me, and shall taste cold lead, according to his desarts."

"Stand away, Adherbal!" cried the trapper sternly; "you can't save her. You're only risking your own life.—Die she must!"

"Not while my rifle has a bullet in it," replied Adherbal doggedly.

"Come, come! stand away," said the other coaxingly; "I would not hurt an old friend."

"Nouthur would I, friend Bruin," replied Adherbal. "It would grieve me monstrous. But that gal saved my life, and the lives of others, and if you hurt but a hair of her head, I'll dose out some lead; that's the way the matter stands, and there's no use in argyfyng about it."

This pause, short as it was, prevented bloodshed. Just as the transient irresolution

of the trapper had passed, and he was advancing against his resolute opponent, the crowd opened, and revealed Wharton. His momentary anger against the girl had yielded to admiration at the boldness of her attempt.

“What means this?” said he as the trapper shrank before him. “Who sought this quarrel?”

Adherbal still held his ground, with his rifle cocked, and answered boldly, “As to who sought the quar’l, ’twas me. That trapper had an idea of killing this gal, who saved me from the stake; and I said, if he did, I’d put a bullet in him; and so I will. That’s the long and short of the matter.”

Wharton turned to his follower—“Is this true?”

“Let him gainsay it if he dare,” said Adherbal.

The trapper was silent, and Wharton walked up to him:—“Silence is a guilty

thing," said he. "Now listen to me, Bruen ! From the time I first knew you till now, which is about two years, you have been the most cruel of my band—ever ready for blood, ever deaf to mercy. Our compact is now dissolved. You may remain with me till I reach the settlements ; but from that hour you are no follower of mine. — Hasbrook," said he, "lead the girl where she will be safe. Look to the young Hawk too. They are a noble pair, and, by my soul ! if I have influence, shall be saved. I will do my utmost to make their lives the means of safety to the whites who are now in the grasp of the Pawnees. —Adherbal," said he, "give me your hand ; you are a noble old fellow, and may you live here a hundred years longer without getting scalped."

"I don't vally that wish much," said Adherbal, "for the settlers will cover this ground before that, and the deer will be gone, and these pararas will be corn-fields ; and as for

my scalp, I reckon at the end of a hundred years there 'll be no Ingens to take it. They 'll be like the big mammoths we hear tell of—*things that were.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

The Pope is stern ; not to be moved or bent,
He looked as calm and keen as is the engine
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself
From aught that it inflicts ; a marble form,
A rite, a law, a custom—not a man.

The Cenci.

It soon became known that it was the intention of Wharton to save the Hawk Chief, and to offer him and Nahtourah in exchange for Herrick and Lucy. This piece of intelligence jarred with the views of the fierce Konzas, for they had in their power a warrior, who had been the scourge of their tribes, and had rendered the prairies that he haunted almost uninhabitable by his foes. So well planned were his projects, and so daringly and rapidly were they carried into effect, that they

were almost invariably attended with success; and scarcely was it known or suspected that this wild chieftain was preparing some expedition against them, before the whoop of his warlike warriors would be ringing in their villages, and ere a sufficient force could be gathered for resistance, he would have disappeared beyond pursuit, leaving the town in flames, and several of its defenders numbered with the dead.

It was his secrecy that clothed him with terrors. They feared not the Pawnee as an open enemy; for in warlike skill the Konzas far surpassed that rude tribe. But the constant harassing, the unexpected and murderous attack, that burst upon them at all hours — at midnight and in the broad light of day, always when least expected, and always conducted by the young Hawk Chief, had invested him with a terror not his own.

When, therefore, the Konzas saw this object of *their* fears, and the Black Wolf the object

of *his* jealousy, in their power, it is scarcely to be wondered at that they were unwilling to yield a prisoner of such importance.

The Hawk Chief having been taken by the Konzas, proposals were first made to the Black Wolf by Wharton to give up his claim. As the warrior listened to the proposition, his dark features lowered with disapprobation, and when Wharton had done, he answered coldly —

“The Pawnee is the captive of the Konza ; the Konza will have his blood.”

Wharton's brow grew troubled as he fixed his eye upon the painted and unyielding face of the Konza. Keenly and anxiously did he examine it, to discover some hidden spring to a feeling of mercy. But his search was vain : the stern brow was still knit, the mouth wore its usual cold smile of scorn, the features were fixed ; but from beneath the spoliated eyebrow^{*} his serpent eye glittered like polished jet,

* The Indians pluck the hair from their eyebrows.

as it met the severe scrutiny of the white man.

Wharton turned with disappointment from the fruitless search.

“Nature,” muttered he, “gives to a savage, what a long life of training will scarcely bestow on a white, — the power of concealing his feelings behind features as fixed as rock.”

As he said this, he again spoke to the savage, who was waiting to hear the words which he rightly judged would follow the rigorous survey of his countenance.

“The Konza Wolf fears the Pawnee Hawk Chief,” said he, in a tone so free from the taunt it was intended to convey, that its very calmness made it more biting. “He trembles while Sharatack is alive; but when the Pawnee is dead, the Konza will dare to rove on the prairie. Is it so?”

This would have been a perilous speech for any save Wharton. But he was known to the wild tribes of that section, and his prowess,

together with his being now surrounded by a numerous band of whites, proved his safeguard. As it was, several dusky hands were observed to steal towards their weapons; and one or two savages, who were mingled with the crowd of trappers, quietly withdrew.

Whatever were the feelings of the Konza Chief, he concealed them and answered calmly :

“ Was the Konza a coward when the white man was lying hid in the island of the Nieboraska,* and the Pawnee was hunting him ? The white man would taunt the Konza to do the deed of a child ; he would set Sharatack free. When the hunter has taken the panther, does he let him go ? What says the pale face ? The ears of the Konza are open—he will hear.”

Wharton paused for a moment. He perceived that the keen-sighted savage detected his object, and he determined to change his

* Platte River.

ground; but before he spoke, Arden addressed him:—"Captain Wharton," said he, "why stand here cavilling with this savage? If he will not yield his prisoner quietly, we are able to take him by force."

"We are at peace with the Konza Indians," replied Wharton, "and I would not excite their hostility. Besides, I expect to be in the Indian country many years longer, and I care not to meet a bullet or a tomahawk from some lurking savage."

Whilst Wharton was speaking, a savage touched the arm of the Black Wolf, and directed his attention to the prairie, where three objects were seen at a far distance. The small specks that at first seemed scarcely to crawl over the earth, increased in size as they came on, until the noble proportions of three horsemen were distinctly discernible. The speed, which at first had been scarcely perceptible in the distance, was now observed to be furious. Without

pause, or appearance of hesitation, the three Indians galloped on until within a short distance of the camp. Here they paused, and appeared to consult. They were all stately men, and governed their horses as if the saddle was their home. Their appearance created a momentary surprise among the Konzas; but emotion is ever short-lived with a savage, and a half-ejaculated exclamation was all they uttered.

The three savages now slowly walked their horses towards the grove. There was something in their air and garb that differed from the Pawnees. There was a beauty of form and a dignified and haughty calmness of feature that contrasted strikingly with the swarthy and ferocious lineaments, and lank though sinewy frames of the Pawnees. Their garb too was unlike. Instead of the shaggy hide of buffalo, each wore a blanket of blue cloth, carelessly thrown over one shoulder, and gathered in graceful folds which floated behind

them. Their prominent and well-rounded chests were but half covered by their robes, and both arms were free; one governing the movements of the steed, while the other supported a rifle.

"Those are not Pawnees," said a trapper; "or if they are, they have made free with the blanket of some dead Konza."

"They'm not Pawnees," said Adherbal; "any one might know that. There's as little resemblance 'twixt a white man and a nigger as there is 'twixt an Otoe and a Pawnee."

"Otoe!"

"Ay! had you lived on these pararas as long as I have, you'd know the marks of every tribe as well as a father knows the features of his own children. Them's Otoes; look at their round limbs, their broad foreheads, their high chests, their leggins, their war paint, their blankets, their rifles. All

them things tell an Ingen's tribe; and they all say that them three Ingens are Otoes."

This accounted for the boldness with which the new-comers entered the encampment. Each then sprang from his horse. A crowd of Konzas and trappers surrounded them. It was not until the first murmurs of surprise had died away among the whites, that they spoke. One of them then rose and explained their errand. They had been sent by the Pawnees to set on foot a negotiation for the liberation of their chief, Sharatack, in exchange for Herrick and Lucy, now in the power of the Pawnees; and intimated that their liberty, if not their lives, depended upon the decision of their friends: that a council of the tribe had been held, and that it had been resolved to offer them in exchange for their chief. Should their offer be rejected, their fate would be certain—death at the stake.

When he had thus explained the object of their mission, he quietly seated himself and drew forth his pipe. He made no efforts to sway their feelings. His errand was executed ; and whether successful or not, was an object of indifference to him.

The proposition of the Pawnees coincided perfectly with the plans of Wharton. The only obstacle was the Black Wolf, and to him he now turned his attention.

The chief heard him coldly, and his warriors gathered round him sullenly and in silence ; but they saw that opposition was useless, and at length a reluctant consent was extorted ; when Wharton, to soothe their chafed feelings, promised a large present of guns and blankets on the part of the two white prisoners. An Indian is ever alive to his own interest ; and though the proud Konza Chief might have preferred the destruction of his rival, the rest of his band were fully satisfied with an arrangement by

which they were to come in for a share of the promised benefits.

These arrangements settled, the Otoes mounted their horses, and walked them slowly out of the grove, until about a hundred yards distant. Then uttering a loud whoop, they shook the rude reins over their heads, and sped off at a gallop.

By mid-day the exchange had been effected. Lucy was clasped in the arms of her father; Herrick was warmly welcomed by his old friend Norton; and the Hawk Chief and Nahtourah were far on their way to the Pawnee village.

CHAPTER XX.

He started, and his glance
Turned angrily upon the maid,
• • • • • breathless, pale,
Against a tree she stood ;
Her warm lips quivering, and her eye
Upraised, in silent, supplicating fear.

Thalaba the Destroyer.

NIGHT had thrown her veil of darkness over the Pawnee town. Far in the east, the red moon was just emerging from the horizon, to commence her calm journey through the starry heavens. Here and there a gaunt wolf-dog was stalking through the village, and occasionally a savage would glide from one lodge to another with a stealthy step.

The stir of life which usually prevailed in the town was gone. The war-song of the warrior, with its wild and not unmusical cadence, was hushed. All was stillness—dead stillness, except when a sobbing wail broke mournfully from the interior of some lodge whose inmates had suffered in the late bereavement.

It was at a late hour of the night that the spell was broken. Warriors muffled in their shaggy robes were seen flitting in the gloom towards the chief's lodge. In silence and with smothered tread they glided onward and entered.

The meeting was one of deep import to the nation. There was a sadness and sternness in it, far unlike the triumphal gathering that had been held but the day previous in the same building. Since then, what a change! The victims doomed to destruction had escaped—had worsted them in conflict; and many of those who had pronounced their

sentence were now stiffening in the embrace of death.

The marks of the fray were stamped upon all. Some were gashed with wounds as yet unbound. Others crouched in the flickering light of the fire, with their features red with gore. Others, again, with their brows knit in sullen furrows, and their useless arms at their sides, sat brooding in silent fury over the disastrous results of their enterprise.

At the upper end of the lodge sat the old chief, and beside him an Indian, with his hair hanging in long and dishevelled flake-locks on his shoulders. The lower part of his body was clothed in a white robe marked with different symbols. His forehead was low, deeply furrowed, and beneath his brow his malignant eyes gleamed like sparks of fire. His face had fallen in, his frame was withered, and his arms were shrunken. Every thing denoted decrepitude, excepting those brilliant snake-like orbs, which showed that, though

his physical powers were wrecked, the fire of his intellect was yet unextinguished.

This was the chief Medecin of the village; one of those whose superior craft or intelligence enables them to bend the wild rabble to their will by their jugglery and pretended communication with the Deity.*

In the centre of the lodge sat a single Indian female, surrounded by a ring of warriors. Upon her the angry looks of all were riveted. It was Nahtourah: she was bound with leathern thongs. The haughtiness which at times lighted up her otherwise soft and feminine features, had disappeared, and she now seemed in the lowest and most heart-breaking despondency. Her hair was dishevelled, her features were wet with tears; not a trace of her bold carriage was left. Once—and but once—she raised her head and ran a wistful

* The Medecin, a French term for physician, is a half-sacred character in an Indian tribe, supposed to heal the sick as much by incantations as by the use of simples.

glance round the assemblage. She encountered not a face that did not scowl upon her, and with a despairing gesture she drooped her eyes to the ground.

The silence which for nearly an hour had filled the building was now broken by the Medecin, who slowly rose. The hush grew intense; the stillness was so wrapped, that it seemed that not a breath was drawn, though every furrowed face was kindled into excitement. The Medecin cast a keen and half-triumphant look upon the girl, then directed his attention to the assembly.

“The Pawnees,” said he, “are sitting in council; but the places of many are empty. Where are the warriors?—Ask the wolves and the ravens that are tearing their limbs, and the white man who laughs as he looks at their white bones.”

The speaker paused to watch the effect of his words. A low fierce murmur sounded

through the building. The Medecin saw that the feelings of the warriors were with him, and seized the moment to confront his victim.

“Woman!” said he sternly to Nahtourah, “there has been a serpent in the Pawnee village, and its bite has been full of poison.”

Nahtourah raised her eyes and murmured scarce audibly — “Nahtourah hears, but she does not understand.”

“Then let her listen. The pale faces escaped — who loosed the cords that bound them? They had horses — where did they find them?”

Nahtourah was silent.

“Who has brought desolation upon the Pawnee village? Who has swept away the warriors of the tribe? Who has brought the curse of Wahconda* upon us?”

With an appearance of effort, the Indian

* The Great Spirit.

maid calmed the emotion that agitated her. "Will the great Medecin listen to Nahtou-rah?" said she in a subdued tone.

"The ears of the Medecin are shut," said the other coldly.

Just then the long and distant howl of wolves was heard.

"Do you hear that cry?" said the Medecin sternly: "'tis a wolf hastening to the spot where the Pawnee is lying: his hand is still; his voice is hushed; he cannot drive away the wolf that tears his limbs: he is dead."

The girl saw that her fate was sealed. She knew that she had been the cause of disaster to the tribe. She had no defence to offer, save her love for Sharatack; and he by some strange fatality was absent. But the utter prostration which at first had paralysed her energies passed away, and her eye kindled as she tauntingly replied,

"Why is the Pawnee dead? The white man hunted him. The Pawnee fled. He

turned not on his pursuer, for his arm was like a woman's; his heart was water; he was a coward."

"He was *killed*," replied the Médecin sternly. "A *warrior* dies; a *coward* escapes."

"A deer that runs is killed by a shaft as well as the fierce bear that fights," was the response of the now undaunted girl. "There were deer among the Pawnees; they were shot in the back."

The Médecin for a moment was silenced. But a low and fierce hiss was distinctly audible from the assembly. In the lodge were the Otoes who had mediated between them and the whites; and the open taunt thus given in the presence of these members of a rival tribe, increased the bitterness of their envenomed feelings.

In the midst of the pause, an aged warrior rose. "The maiden has betrayed her tribe," said he; "she has brought death among the Pawnees: let her die!"

A savage murmur of assent ran through the lodge, which was succeeded by a dead stillness. At that moment there was an agitation among the crowd nearest the door. It opened, and a warrior entered and stalked to the centre. A slight exclamation of joy escaped the prisoner, for at a glance she recognized the proud lineaments and noble form of the Hawk Chief.

Slowly and calmly his eye moved from face to face until it rested upon that of the Medecin. Their look met for an instant, but that of the Medecin drooped and shrank from his piercing gaze. From him it wandered to Nahtourah, and its expression softened as it rested upon her.

“Why is the Indian maiden a prisoner among her own people?” said he to the Medecin. “She is a Pawnee; wherefore is she bound like an enemy? A wild beast preys not on its kind.”

The Medecin was aware that the assem-

blage was on his side, and his hardihood returned. He replied boldly :

“ There is white blood in the veins of Nah-tourah ; she has turned from her nation and become a pale face.”

The lip of the Hawk Chief curled, as he answered, “ The great Medecin sings in the ear of Sharatack ; his words fall to the ground.”

Speech could not have conveyed the feeling of hate and cowardice more clearly than the black scowl that swept over the face of the Medecin as he heard these words, which in the Indian language convey a direct accusation of falsehood. He, however, answered in those tones of moderation which are often assumed as a veil for fear.

“ My brother is young,” said he ; “ he speaks fast ; his words come only from his mouth.”

The Hawk Chief answered calmly, “ The words of Sharatack are not songs. Listen !

The great Medecin would have Nahtourah die. It is well. When Nahtourah dies, the knife of Sharatack shall be red with the blood of the Medecin. I have spoken."

As he finished, he drew himself up, and stepped back as if to make room for the Indian to pass forward to his victim. The Medecin was irresolute; he cast a quick but keen glance round the building, to learn from the swarthy faces whether he was likely to be supported in his sacrifice. He saw with instinctive quickness, that though many of the older portion of the audience, influenced perhaps by his sacred character, were disposed to favour him, yet that the bold bearing of the Hawk Chief had produced a revolution in the younger and more fiery members of the council.

After pausing for a moment, he addressed the Hawk Chief:

"My brother speaks words of fire. He knows not what he says; he speaks for one

who has betrayed her tribe—for one who has brought death into the lodge of the Pawnee.”

The face of the Hawk Chief grew troubled. He folded his arms and bent his eyes to the ground. “Let the Medecin speak,” said he; “Sharatack will hear.”

With a look of malignant joy, the Indian priest hastened to recount the release of the whites by Nahtourah. He related how Nahtourah had guided them in their escape and furnished them with horses. Every thing that could tend to criminate and excite feelings against her was dwelt on by the crafty priest.

The countenance of the young chief was unmoved throughout the whole recital. When it was finished, Sharatack made two steps towards the girl.

“Nahtourah!” said he in a tone whose softness, at that moment, so strongly contrasted with the stern words lately addressed to her, that it sounded like music to her ears.

The girl raised her head, and fixed her eyes fondly on his face.

“Did Nahtourah cut the bonds of the white man?” asked he. “Did she set the pale face free?”

Nahtourah’s head sank heavily upon her breast, and she made no reply.

“Speak, Nahtourah,” said Sharatack, somewhat sternly; “are the words of the Medecin true?”

Nahtourah sank at the feet of her interrogator, as she murmured, “They are true.”

The Hawk Chief drew back, apparently unmoved; but one might have observed a momentary tremulousness of features, that instantly disappeared. He stood in silence, with his gaze bent steadily on the prostrate girl. He was aroused by the voice of the Medecin.

“Sharatack has heard the maiden; shall she die?”

“Sharatack was a prisoner,” replied the Indian gloomily. “The stake was waiting for him—Nahtourah risked her life to set him free.”

“Who placed the snare that caught Sharatack?” demanded the Medecin. “It was Nahtourah. Who has robbed us of warriors strong in fight, and voices wise in counsel? Nahtourah. What says the Hawk of his tribe? shall she not die?”

The frame of the young chief was for a moment convulsed; but in an instant his expression changed to fixed calmness, as he replied, “The Medecin is right; let her go!”

Nahtourah had raised her eyes to the face of the speaker; but when she heard these words of condemnation, she sank down, as if smitten by some sudden and overpowering blow. “She will die, Nahtourah will die!” murmured she; “Sharatack has spoken—she will die.”

The Medecin approached her. "Has Nah-tourah heard the words of the council?" demanded he.

"She has heard enough!" replied the girl. "She has heard the words of Sharatack, and she will die!"

"'Tis well," replied the Medecin coldly; "the dead are waiting for her."

The Hawk Chief had drawn back as the Medecin approached his victim. The form and features of the young warrior were muffled, except the upper part of his face; but from above his robe, his eyes were bent upon the Medecin like coals of fire.

The priest gathered the long hair of the girl in one hand, then thrusting the other beneath his robe, drew forth a knife. With a sudden jerk he threw back the head of the girl so as to leave bare her bosom, and raised the glittering blade. But at that instant a yell, wild and unearthly, rang through the lodge. The Medecin lay grovelling on the

ground, and Nahtourah was raised high up on the breast of Sharatack. He stood in the middle of the council-chamber, and glared upon the awed crowd. In his hand he held his tomahawk; his form swelled, and every feature was alive with passion.

"Nahtourah shall not die!" said he, in tones of smothered fury. "Let the Medecin beware! Nahtourah is the *wife* of Sharatack. The Hawk has talons."

The priest rose from the ground, drew back from the neighbourhood of the warrior who had levelled him, forced his way through the crowd, and fled the lodge.

A short silence followed the departure of the priest, who was rather feared than loved by the savages, and they were therefore more disposed to admire one who disregarded a power *that overawed* themselves. At length an old Indian rose.

"Nahtourah released the pale-faced prisoners. She merits death. 'Tis clear. But

Sharatack has claimed her for his wife. 'Tis well! He is a great warrior. Her children will be warriors of the tribe. Are my words good?"

A murmur of assent ran from mouth to mouth. Then one after another the warriors rose, as if all business were concluded, and quitted the council-chamber, leaving Nah-tourah and Sharatack.

The young chief cut the bonds that bound the girl, and holding her before him at arm's length, gazed steadily in her face.

"The old warrior spoke well," said he; "Sharatack has taken an enemy to the Pawnees for his wife! will she love him?"

With a glad cry the girl sprang forward, threw her arms round his neck, and pressed her cheek to his breast.

CHAPTER XXI.

Stranger. But, sure, all changes are not needs for the worse,
my friend?

Old Man. Mayhap they mayn't, sir: for all that,
I like what I've been used to. I remember
All this from a child up; and now to lose it,
'Tis losing an old friend. There's nothing left
As 'twas ——

—— The trees I learnt
To climb are down; and I see nothing now
That tells me of old times.

SOUTHEY.

ON the morning succeeding the return of Herrick and Lucy, the camp of the trappers rang with sounds of preparation. All was bustle and activity, for all were anxious to escape from a neighbourhood yet fraught with peril. The tents were struck, the mules were

laden with their bales of fur. A number had been set apart for the use of the wounded, and two were appropriated to Lucy and her father. As they left the grove, and came into the open prairie, where they could have a view of the beetling cliffs, which reared their grey and riven sides high in the air, they paused by one consent, to cast a last glance upon the eventful spot, and to regard that carnage which had been the work of their own hands. High up in the air were carrion birds, so distant that they seemed like specks moving against the blue sky. A wolf but just attracted by the smell of death was dashing furiously up the cliffs, as if fearing to be too late at the banquet of the dead.

Here and there, upon the field, several females were observed stealing over the spot in search of a relative or friend; and in one or two places, a few scattered warriors were standing with folded arms, viewing the work.

of death, and probably brooding over some plan of bloody retribution.

The pause was short, and without remark. Bidding adieu to the Pawnee battle-ground, they commenced their homeward journey.

* * * * *

We must now pass over a lapse of some months. The autumn had passed. Winter had succeeded with its mantle of snow, and in turn had given place to the sunny smiles of spring. The naked forests had put forth their leaves. The soft western breezes had usurped the empire of the rude blasts of the north. The carol of the migratory birds was heard among the verdant foliage. The black prairies had changed their garb of mourning for rich verdure; and all nature seemed rejoicing that its hour of bondage was past.

The place where the narrative again opens is far from the scene of the last chapter. After the battle of the cliffs, the party reached

the settlements in safety, and without adventure. After a short stay, Mr. Wilford and his daughter had departed for their home near St. Louis. Herrick had accompanied them. In a few months it became known that Mr. Ostrand was to espouse the beautiful Miss Wilford, and finally the day was fixed for the nuptials. Norton, Adherbal, and even Sip had been sent for.

The negro, with the characteristic fondness of his race for a holiday, had travelled two hundred miles to be present. He was accompanied by Adherbal, who grumbled the whole way. He had not been within the state borders for many years, and the march of settlement had been so rapid, that everything was changed. He saw farm-houses where he had formerly hunted deer, and he found a corn-field where he once had a desperate battle with Indians. His repugnance to civilization increased with every step that

he advanced within its borders. The fences too annoyed him. He had been accustomed to see a wide expanse, hemmed in by no barrier but the horizon, with no inhabitants but deer or buffalo—no owner except the Indian, as wild as either.

At length he came near the place where he had formerly lived; he turned half a day's journey from the road to visit the spot. He had not been there since the death of his mother. He searched for the lowly log cabin, but it was gone. The high forest which had sheltered it had disappeared—a village had sprung up on the spot. He roved round the place, like the bird round the tree that had contained its nest, which had been pillaged during its absence. He knew nothing; he had no landmarks. "Gone, gone, —all gone!" muttered he: "no good can come of this cutting and slashing. A tree, as God made it, is worth twenty of their houses."

His rude companion listened with calmness; but he could not understand the feelings which dictated the remark.

Adherbal left the village, and struck across a meadow to a forest that had not yet fallen. He threaded its mazes with a familiar footstep. He stopped beneath a sycamore, a giant of its race. There was a rude mound at its foot, and the traces of rough carving were on the bark.

“There she is buried!” muttered he; “my mother! Never from the day I laid her in the ground till now, have I been here!—’tis a long time since. Yon tree,” said he, pointing to an oak, “was but a sapling; this sycamore was green, it had leaves: it is now dead, its limbs are rotten. I have growed grey since, but I never forgot the spot. She was the only one that ever loved me. I have had friends who would have shared their last crust with me; but they did not care for me like my mother. I remember, when I was

a boy,—but it's no matter—it's no matter. There's no use in stopping here; come, let's go. I shall never cross the Indian line again; it makes my heart heavy. I hope they'll spare her grave."

He left the spot: nor during the rest of the journey did he recur to the subject.

* * * * *

The country seat of Mr. Wilford stood upon the banks of the Mississippi. It was surrounded by groves of tall trees, and commanded an extensive view of the rushing river. In front of the house, a lawn about a quarter of a mile in breadth, and bordered by the shrubbery, extended to the river. A single tall tree, with wide-spreading branches, rose in the midst of the green. Under it were two persons. The first was an aged, weather-beaten white man; and the other was an equally weather-worn negro.

"Well, Sip," said the first, lazily stretching himself, "I'm getting weary of the set-

lements; they are monstrous tiresome. The doings are all over; Herrick and the gal are married. We've seed all that is to be seed; and for my part, I'm tired of having a host of niggers to do every thing for me. I shall start to-morrow to the west'ard. I haven't seed a deer or a buffalo for more than a month."

"Goy! Mas Herbal," replied Sip, "what you tink! dey'm makin a gemplin o' me; I'se got tree little niggers to wait on me. Sho, yah, yah, yah!" shouted he, giving way to a broad-mouthed peal of merriment. "What tink Mas John would say if he seed it? Yah, yah, yah! Ole nigger made a gemplin of! yah, yah, yah!"

"I suppose he'd tell some lie or other," replied Adherbal gravely; "you know he's dreadful given to it."

Sip's laughter ceased; and he raised himself for the purpose of vindicating his mas-

ter's character. He was cut short by Adherbal.

"There's no use in talking on that subject," said he; "we sha'n't agree upon it, so you'll only waste breath. Yonder are Herrick and the gal."

They came across the green to where the two were sitting.

"This old tree seems to be a favourite of yours," said Lucy, addressing him; "you spend many hours beneath its shade."

"I like a big tree," replied Adherbal; "it reminds me of the bottom timber to the west'ard. As to sleeping in its shade, I take it, it's altogether unnecessary for a man to do any thing when he has all he wants for the asking. I'm tired of this life."

"I hope," said Lucy anxiously, "you have not been neglected. It was my father's express order, that every thing should be as

free to you as to ourselves. You know, Adherbal, you saved my life. You know, too——”

“No, no, lady,” replied Adherbal, “there’s no want of kindness on your part. God knows, I never had so much tending on, during my whole life, as since I’ve been here. I can’t turn without having a nigger at my elbow to ax what I want. The other day, I caught a fellow trying to black and polish my moccasins; a thing I never heerd of.—No—all are kind enough; but I want the prairies. I feel choked among all these hedges. If I go in one direction, one man axes, ‘What are you doing on my land?’ If I go in a different, another says, ‘What do you want in my fields?’ All this is mighty bothersome. On the prairies I go where I please: sometimes an Ingen has something to say agin it; then we fight it out. Here we hear nothing but law—law—law. — Now I say, d—n law! I don’t onderstand it. All I ax is fair play;

and I want no one to help me to settle my own troubles. I shall start to-morrow for Wolf Hill."

The old man was firm in his resolution: he was deaf to all arguments to divert him from his purpose. "You will remember, however," said Lucy, "that my father's house will be always open to you ;—and," said she, raising her eyes to Herrick, "I think I may speak for another."

"You may, Lucy ; I need scarcely say how highly I value the man that saved *your* life."

"You see, Adherbal," continued Lucy, "that should old age or accident disable you from living on the wild spots you love, you will know where to look for friends and a home. Is there nothing that we can do for you? Have you guns, powder, flints,—all that you need in your present mode of living?"

Adherbal mused for a short time. At

length he said, "There's one thing I would like, though it's costly. In going through the town, I seed one of them new guns, that shoot with caps instead of flints. I should like to own it. It costs more money than I ever had; but if you'd buy it, I'd pay you in deer hams."

"You shall have it," replied Lucy; "but I will not rob you of your venison."

"No robbery at all," replied Adherbal; "deer's meat is as plenty with me as dollars are with you. Send the gun to Major Harville, at Wolf Hill; then I shall be sure to get it."

Lucy made no further objection to receiving the payment of game, as she saw it was a matter of pride with the hunter not to accept the gun as a gift.

The debt of Adherbal was faithfully paid; every autumn brought a present of venison hams, accompanied by some Indian trinket

which he thought might be acceptable to Lucy.

In company with Adherbal, Sip started for the home of his master, highly elated with a new suit of clothes and a silver watch, presented to him by his entertainers.

As for the rest of the characters :— Norton spent the greatest part of his time at the bluff. He occasionally, however, visited St. Louis, and passed a week or two with Her-rick.

Arden was killed a few months after in a duel with Fitzgerald.

The Doctor still flourished in his native town, telling large stories about his Indian campaign, and particularly boasting of the fight he had with Sharatack. He is always backed by Sip, who has confirmed the story so often, and with so many variations, that he has entirely forgotten the truth of the matter, and now conscientiously be-

believes that his master performed all that he asserts.

It is generally remarked, however, that the Doctor never dilates upon his exploits while Adherbal is in the neighbourhood of the settlements. He watches that veteran with a jealous eye, and his stories enlarge as the old hunter recedes from civilization.

Mr. Weazen is still alive, still a tailor, and may be seen of a fine afternoon sauntering through the town with a fat, comfortable wife at his side, a child on each hand, and a train of young Weazens in the rear.

There is sometimes a discrepancy in the stories of the Doctor and Weazen; but the latter, being a feeble-winded man, with a weak voice, and not cut out for a soldier, is easily awed into silence by the loud words of his opponent. By this means, he has gained for himself the reputation of a notorious liar; while the Doctor is always referred to as a

standard authority on all subjects touching that eventful expedition.

Cuff is occasionally seen strolling about the town, with a troop of children at his heels. He is a great favourite with this portion of the community, as he tells long stories of the Indians, and he knows where the best perimmons are to be found. He is capital, too, at snaring quails and squirrels.

Major Harville and his charming wife still diffuse the elegancies of polished life over the rude cantonment of Wolf Hill; and General Ashton still smokes and dozes at the agency, becoming every day more veteran and more lethargic.

The Black Wolf, with the Konza tribe, continue the fast friends of the white men. The Young Hawk and the Pawnees are still the terror of the borders; and Nahtourah, happy with her warrior, is still the paragon of Indian squaws.

We have departed from the modern usage, well suited to works of fiction, of dropping the curtain abruptly at some eventful incident, like the termination of a drama. We have preferred, at the close of our narrative, to give the reader a parting glimpse of the persons who have figured before him in this tale of the Indian country.

THE END.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.









